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Nugæ

ABM. STANSFIELD





M^r Abram Smith

With the Author's Best
regards.

Abraham Mansfield

Inscribed by author



BEING SELECTIONS FROM MANY YEARS'
SCRIBBLINGS IN VERSE,

BY

ABM. STANSFIELD,

("A. S. K.")

AUTHOR OF "GROUND-FLOWERS AND FERN-LEAVES."

Nescio quid meditans nugarum.—HOR.

Printed for the Author by
GEO. WOODHEAD & CO., 17 COLEMAN ST., LONDON, E.C.,
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1892.

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ERRATA.

Page 34, for "*protulerat*" read "*protuleratque*."

„ 120, line 5, for "highland" read "island."

„ 145, line 11, for "to a bird" read "as of old."

„ 174, line 7, for "plentitude" read "plenitude."

„ 341, line 1, for "Springa" read "Syringa."

PREFACE.



T is now many years since the author of the following NUGÆ published anonymously a collection of verses, some of which are included in the present volume, under the title of "Ground-Flowers and Fern-Leaves." The very favourable reception accorded by the public to "Ground-Flowers," which has long been out of print, was the more gratifying to its author that his motive in publishing was merely a desire to escape by that means the drudgery of copying out for his friends those of his desultory scribblings which had happened to commend themselves to their too partial judgment.

In the present case the circumstances and governing motive are the same ; and if a similar result should follow, the author will have cause to entertain but one regret, though a profound one, viz. this, that want of leisure should have prevented him from making the following " selections " more worthy of general acceptance ; though he could hardly hope, under any circumstances, to make them worthy of critical attention.

But lest some critics, more amiable than the rest, should deem his verses worthy of notice, the author has sought to anticipate their judgment to the extent at least of affixing to his book as modest a title as he could find.

THE AUTHOR.

KERSAL, MANCHESTER,
November 16th, 1892.

Wollt ihr wissen, was die Augen sein,
Womit ich sie sehe durch alle Land?
Es sind die Gedanken des Herzens mein!
Damit schau ich durch Mauer und Wand.

—WALTHER VON DER VOGELWEIDE.

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



*O wenn die Nacht des Grames dich umschlinget,
Mit schwerem Leid dein wundes Herz oft ringet,
Wenn nur der Stern, der nach der Sonne steht,
Der Liebe Stern, in dir nicht untergeht?*

—PH. CONZ.



Sketch of a Poem on the Death of Sir Philip Sidney.

INSCRIBED TO R. S.

"Never again let lass put garland on ;
Instead of garland wear sad cypress now,
And bitter elder broken from the bough !"

"Ah me, to whom shall I my case complain
That may compassion my impatient grief ?
Or where shall I unfold my inward pain,
That my eniven heart may find relief ?
Shall I unto the heavenly powers it show ?
Or unto earthly men that dwell below ?

Mary, Countess of Pembroke
(Sir Philip's sister)

PART I.—THE ENGLISH FIVE HUNDRED AT ZUTPHEN.

THE Spaniards they held Zutphen, that lies in
Guelderland,
When Leicester from Elizabeth received the
stern command :

The town must fall ; on you I call, by famine or the
sword,

To conquer for me Zutphen, and drive out the Spanish
horde !

But the Spanish general, Parma,* in the hour of Zut-
phen's need,

* The Prince of Parma.

Did send four thousand horse and foot,† to gallop with
all speed ;

Whom then to meet Earl Leicester called out a gallant
band :

The flower of England's chivalry obeyed the Earl's
command.

There was Willoughby, and Stanley—Russell, and
Essex, too ;

And noble Philip Sidney, the boldest of the crew !

Five hundred of our bravest were sent to meet the foe
(Five hundred to four thousand, alas, what could they
do !)

In ambuscade the English lay, the foe came thundering
on

(Four thousand 'gainst five hundred, 'twas almost ten
to one !)

But in that early morning the mists so thickly rolled,
The number of the Spaniards was hardly to be told.

Our English braves have lion-hearts ; what reck they
if the foe

Be ten to one, or five to one, or three to one, or two !

If but the word be given them, though many or though
few—

And though it be an army, they'll cut that army
through !

'Tis not for *them* to count the foe, *they* heed but the
command ;

As witness what they've done in this, and many another
land—

†Historians differ as to the exact number.

As witness Balaclava, where Lord Lucan gave the word,
And scarce six hundred English 'gainst an *army* drew
the sword !

Right in the fog the English charged against the
Spaniards there—

Against a number all unknown, five hundred did dare ;
And how these fought, how gallantly, against the fearful odds,

Let history tell, I wot it was an army of the gods !
Five hundred through four thousand when they had cut
their way,

At length the foe was counted—the mists had cleared
away :

Five hundred amid *thousands*, it was a fearful sight—
With all the guns of Zutphen town there pointed from
the height !

Now noble Earl of Leicester, bethink thee what is
best !

Bring help unto that gallant crew, so terribly distrest.
But no ; the English army, it standeth like a post !—
The Earl he knows not what to do—the victory is lost !
Ah ! now from England's chivalry free spurteth the
red gore ;

And many a gallant Englishman doth fall to rise no
more—

The flower of the *world's* chivalry are bleeding on the
plain ;

And *One, the bravest of them all, will never fight again !*

PART II.—THE POET SOLDIER.

And who, of all that gallant crew, was foremost in the
fight?

Sir Henry Sidney's son it was, "Sir Philip" was he
hight :

The finest English gentleman the world had ever seen—
Admired by all, beloved by all, the honoured of the
Queen,

The darling of his family, the pride of England's
Court,

A scholar learn'd and skilful, a master of each sport,
A noble soul, and full of fire, a tender heart beside—
One in all wisdom, virtue ripe, and born a realm to
guide ! *

* * * *

I wot the good Sir Henry his labour had not spared
To make his son a "perfect man," as through the
world he fared.

Nor yet a scholar merely, but a noble poet he ;
None other than a poet could fair Pembroke's brother
be !

And ah, the gentle Pembroke, she loved that brother well,
For next unto her "dearest" in her heart did Philip
dwell ;

Together in their childhood, and together in their youth,
Each one had loved the other well, and both had loved
the truth—

* Long before this, the Prince of Orange, surnamed "William the Silent," had testified, in a message to Queen Elizabeth, "that Mr. Philip Sidney was one of the ripest and greatest statesmen which he knew of in all Europe," which message the modest "Mr. Philip" would not allow to be delivered.

They both had loved the truth, and for "the Faith"
 had striven,
And e'en amid the blaze of courts had sought the way
 to heaven—
The way, alas ! how difficult to mortals here below ;
But threefold still more difficult for *courtiers* to go !
Yet Philip, and his sister sweet, had held that higher
 road—
Amid earth's scenes of revelry their hearts still turned
 to God ;
Nor ever breathed in England a nobler, better pair
Than the valiant knight, Sir Philip, and the Lady Pem-
 broke fair !*

PART III.—SIR PHILIP IS MORTALLY WOUNDED AT
 ZUTPHEN.

And now the Poet-soldier, by command of England's
 Queen,
With many another gallant knight, in Guelderland is
 seen ;
From Walcheren's wild marshes, where late he held
 command,
Straight at his uncle's summons he musters at his
 hand.**
Against the Spanish enemy Earl Leicester sends him
 on,
With others of his chosen troops, at rising of the sun ;

*It is worthy to be noted here that Sir Philip, and his sister Mary, both of them earnest Protestants, were named, the one after the Catholic Philip of Spain, the other after the Catholic Mary of England.

** Through family intermarriages, the powerful Earl of Leicester was Sir Philip's uncle.

And how, against the fearful odds, these Englishmen
did fight

Before the walls of Zutphen town let history recite.

* * * *

Though Willoughby his valour showed, and Russell
won renown,

A braver knight than Philip proved the world hath
never known.

* * * *

Thrice had he rode, full gallantly, right through the
Spanish ranks ;

And thrice the steam had risen from his horse's smoking
flanks !

* * * *

'Tis madness all, though lion-like fight on that gallant
band :

Thick swarm the foe—they close around, a thousand on
each hand !

Uplifts the fog—a hundred guns are frowning from the
walls !

And, hark ! a shot—a fatal shot—the gallant Sidney
falls !—

But no ; he rallies—sits his horse, and rideth boldly on !
Ball proof is he—ball-proof *must* be—Sir Henry's
valiant son !

He rides, he gallops, like a knight, before his wonder-
ing foes ! †

*Yet hath it sped, that bullet dread ; his life is near a close—
Too well hath sped that bullet dread, as England soon
shall hear,*

†Sir Philip rode a mile and a half after receiving his death-wound.

*For it hath slain, on Zutphen plain, the knight she held
so dear ;
And through her bounds shall wailing sounds be heard on
every wind,
Since he hath gone—her noblest son, nor left his peer
behind !*

PART IV.—HOW THE NEWS OF SIR PHILIP'S DEATH
WAS RECEIVED IN ENGLAND.

A cloud hath fallen on England, it hangs o'er hill and
plain ;
And hardly a man in England from weeping can refrain ;
And hardly a maid in England, from the poorest to the
Queen,
But sheds a tender tear, to-day, for him that's dead, I
ween !
O'er hut and hall, and palace tall, there broods a
mighty grief ;
And a sorrow is there that hugs despair, nor looketh for
relief ;
For the valiant knight, "Sir Philip," the glory and the
pride
Of England, and all Europe too, in Guelderland hath
died !*
"Late, wounded on the Zutphen plain," the direful
news was spread
Both far and wide, on every side, "the knight is sore
bested !"

*So universal was the mourning for Sir Philip that we are told "No English gentleman appeared in colours for many months after his death. The flower of the nation had been plucked just as the bud was expanding and they had the sense to see it."

But little wot the men who bore the tidings to their
Queen
Of Sidney's wound so soon should die the knight of
valiant mien !
And little the English sovereign deemed, amid her
splendid court,
That she should never more behold her knight of
gallant port—
Now striding boldly, bravely forth, in palace or in hall,
Now starting his proud courser, at the blaring bugle's
call !

* * * *

To Arnheim had they borne him straight, from Zut-
phen's fatal plain ;
At Arnheim town, for many days, the wounded knight
had lain ;
And every day, at utmost speed, were couriers sent to
tell
To England, and to England's Queen, what to the
knight befell !
Then quick-succeeding couriers thus :

1ST COURIER.—“ Sir Philip's dying fast :
*The knight that never yielded yet doth yield to Death at
last !* ”

2ND COURIER :—

“ The noble soul, the spirit pure, of Sidney hath gone
forth ;
And well may England weep, to-day, that knew her
Sidney's worth ! ”



The Magic Cloak.

(AFTER UHLAND.)

TO battle I go, dear daughter mine,
But stars give out an evil sign ;
So prithee, now, a garment weave,
By finest hands of fairest Eve !”

“ A garment weave me, daughter mine,
To counterwork the stars malign ;
For a robe that's wrought by maiden-hand
Will bear us safely through the land !”

“ O sire ! thou wouldst n't a garment wear
That's wrought by the weakest woman here ;
For how could I work in hard, hard steel,
Who'm only used to the spinning wheel ?”

“ Now, now, child ! go, and spin through the night—
Spin, and weave me, a garment white ;
And call, as thou weav'st, the powers of H—ll ;
So what thou weavest may guard me well !”

At dead of night, when the moon did shine,
In lonely room span the maiden fine ;

“ In the name of H—ll !” she whispered low,
And ever the wheel would quicker go.

And while she span her warm blood chilled,
And a cold horror her spirit filled :
“ In H—ll’s name ! ” whispered the trembling girl,
And ever the wheel would quicker whirl.

And now she sits at the weaving stool,
And casts, with timid hand, the spool,
While clatters and rattles the loom, as though
The web were wove by the fiends below !

It clatters, rattles, and clatters again,
As though they were weaving might and main ;
And the ear is deafened with the roar,
Till the maiden’s dreary task is o’er.

At dawn, while the host to the battle-field
Press eager on, with sword and shield,
Before them, in his robe of white,
The bold duke leads them to the fight.

And where he comes, in wild dismay,
The bravest of the foe give way ;
For strange, unearthly signs it bore,
The white robe that the dread duke wore !

The panic spreads ; for none withstand
The strength of that almighty hand ;
From his helmet harmless falls the dart,
And terror strikes each manly heart.

A bold youth springs before him, then :
“ Stay, murderer, stay ! thou scourge of men !
I’ll fight thee with this sword alone ;
Thy work is dead, the charm has gone ! ”

Thus saying, on the duke he fell,
Who knew that blow to parry well ;
In turn upon the youth he bore,
To strike him dead—*he* fell before !

But upright, in an instant, now,
By a bold stroke, the youth is low ;
Yet only for a moment, soon
A deadlier struggle has begun :

All that the fire of youth can do
The haughty duke at length he knew ;
One fell stroke from the flashing brand
Of that brave youth, he bit the sand !

Ah, what avails the charmed cloak !
In ruin lies the mighty 'oak ;
His white robe streaming with his gore,
The vanquished duke will fight no more.

Nor the brave youth ; a fatal wound
Drags him half-senseless to the ground ;
And there the two together lie,
In the last mortal agony.

The maiden comes, her sire to seek,
With pale, pale roses on her cheek ;
They point her where the warriors lie,
Still cursing in their agony.

“ O daughter ! say : how didst thou spin
The false cloak that thou cloth'dst me in ?
Didst call, as I bade thee, on H—ll's name,
Or is there a *spot* on thy maidenly fame ?”

“ I called, O, sire, as thou bad'st me do,
But not as a maiden I span, 'tis true ;
The bride am I of this youth so proud,
And thus, my sire, have I spun thy shroud !”





Donald Gorm.*

A TALE OF THE HEBRIDES.

INSCRIBED TO J. R. S.

THE wind roareth loud by Dunvegan,† to-night !"
The Skyeman had said, as he shuddered with
fright,

" Macleod's high castle, that stands on the rock,
To-night it shall shake with the tempest's shock !"

'Twas a night of mid-winter, and loud roared the
storm,

But o'er the wild waters had passed Donald Gorm ;
So trusty his boatmen, so stalwart and brave,
They recked not the roar of the wind or the wave !

'Twas a time of black tempest ; Macleod looked forth,
From the walls of Dunvegan, to south and to north :
'Tis a night of the Giants !" quoth he, " if my foe,
Donald Gorm, were to knock, I would open thereto !"

*Macdonald of Sleat, Donald Gorm, or Blue Donald, as he was
alternately called.

†Dunvegan Castle, on the N.W. coast of the Island of Skye.

Thus saying, he entered, and sat at the feast ;
His humour was gay, and his wit of the best ;
The liquor went round, and the torches they glowed ;
The chieftain he joked, and his men laughed aloud.

Nor ended the feast, when the door opens wide ;
One enters, and beckons his chieftain aside :
“ Thy foe, Donald Gorm, here the shelter doth crave
Of thy walls, for the night, from the wind and the wave !”

“ Then let him be welcome !” he says, at a word.
Macdonald, he entered, and sat at the board ;
All wet with the spray of the sea, with his men,
Macdonald sat mute ; when the chief spake again :

“ Be welcome, brave Donald, to share of the feast ;
Partake with your men, and partake of our best ;
But *you*, the bold leader, sit here, *at the head* !”
“ I thank you,” says Donald, “ I’ll sit *here*, instead !”

For Donald he doubted Dunvegan’s good word,
And, doubting, he sat with his hand on his sword ;
While thus to Macleod he scornfully said :
“ Wherever Macdonald sits, *there* is the head !”

Now the feasting hath ended, wild talk follows on,
And each must recount the bold deeds he has done ;
Bright blades are unsheathed, to admire and to praise ;
But the sword of Macdonald is sheathed always.

Then riseth Dunvegan, all hot from the board :
“ Macdonald, I beg you will show us your sword !”
“ Behold it, Macleod !” he said, and pulled forth :
“ *It is here, in the strongest hand in the north !*”

The stalwart Dunvegan wot well of the strength
Of his foe, Donald Gorm, and he thus spake at length :
" No doubt, my brave Donald, your talking is fine ;
But where's the *next* strong hand to that hand of thine ?"

" Why here !" said Macdonald, and held up his *left* ;
And the laird of Dunvegan's bitten lip it was cleft—
In twain was it cleft, since his rage was so strong,
For the chieftain he hated had baited him long !—

Had baited, and bullied, and baulked him ; he swore
Macdonald should bully and bait him no more ;
He vowed on the foe his dire vengeance to wreak ;
But hid his hot anger, while thus he did speak :

" I toast Donald Gorm, and I hold him my guest ;
He shall sleep with us, here, in a room of the best ;
For his guardsmen so bold, and his piper so gay,
They'll sleep in the barn, on the heather, till day !"

" I thank you, Macleod," said Donald again,
" I'm fond of the heather ; I'll go with my men !"
The crafty Dunvegan he plies him in vain ;
To-night is Macdonald awake, it is plain.

But the chieftain Macleod's so cunning and deep,
Love only can baulk him, that never doth sleep ;
Wide awake was Macdonald, but had not Love been
Yet wider, I wot he had died with his men—

Had died like a rat in a hole, since the barn
At the black hour of midnight was fated to burn ;

For such was the plan of Dunvegan's dark laird :
"Burn them out !" said Macleod, "be none of them
spared !"

In the Castle Dunvegan there dwelt a sweet maid
Who loved, and was loved in return it is said ;
But, alas, for her lover ! he serveth the foe
Of her chieftain, Macleod, and with him will go.

Then Love, full of wiles, he doth busy himself ;
And, prompting the maiden, says : "Speak to the elf
Of the burning at midnight." The maiden has told,
And has blanched the red cheek of her lover so bold !

Macdonald strides forth with his men to the barn,
New-strown with fresh heather, nor dreameth of harm ;
And, weary, would sleep there, well wrapt in his plaid ;
When his guardsman he tells him the words of the
maid !

Dark frowned the Macdonald, and frowning he cried :
"Come forth, my brave comrades, whatever betide !
Though the wind bloweth loud, no shelter is here ;
But yet shall Macleod's craft cost him full dear !"

With rage at his heart, then, he leads to the door ;
Descendeth in silence where, fast by the shore,
A high rock is standing, the castle below ;
And his guardsmen *silently* after him go.

At the black hour of midnight, the barn was aglow
With fire (not a stone is there left of it now) ;
But safe was Macdonald, the chieftain so bold,
Though down in the darkness his lodging was cold.

At the dawning of day, the wild storm had passed
o'er:—

Strides forth the Macdonald—his piper before.†
Dunvegan, forth-looking, with wonder doth gaze,
Not deeming his foe had escaped from the blaze !

“ Ha ! ha ! ” quoth Macdonald, “ your welcome was
warm,

My gallant Macleod, last night, in the barn !
But hear me, Dunvegan ; ” he lifted his sword,
And spake out so fierce, 'twas a blow at each word :

“ The years they are many I've fought with your clan ;
And many I've slain since the day I began ;
With *this* in my hand, 'twas your sire that I killed,
Now, in his son's heart it shall go to the hilt ! ”

Dunvegan hath fallen ; the boatmen below
Await their bold chieftain, who leaps to the prow ;
And ere from the castle they sound the alarm,
Far o'er the dark waters hath passed Donald Gorm.

†It was usual, when the chieftain went about, for his piper to walk
before him, playing the bagpipe.





The Last String.

[A TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN OF GUSTAV
HARTWIG.]

CCHEERILY, cheerily, fiddler mine !
Come, drink thou a glass of the foaming wine ;
For the night is cold, and thy way is wide,
And frost and snow are on every side.

Then he bids " Good night !" to the merry *corps*,
And fiddle in hand, he strides to the door ;
From the inn's warm hearth, and his comrades gay,
Full boldly he starts on his wintry way.

And as he had lustily handled the bow,
So plods he sturdily over the snow ;
Nay, though he is far away from his home,
By the forest-path how soon he might come !

" Oh, God ! I am cold—I am freezing ! no ;
By the gloomy forest I needs must go ;
And have I not pass'd there on many a night,
When never a tiny star shed its light ! "

On the snowy plain—with the moon o'er all—
See ! the shadows of sombre pine-trees fall !
And the woods are silent, save where the snow,
With its weight is breaking the branches below.

The fiddler steps gaily over the ground,
For the coin in his pouch hath a musical sound ;
And he thinks of his home, and his spousie so rare,
And in his quick fancy already is there !

Like the thousand arms of a giant hoar,
The forest stretches behind and before ;
And the icy fingers of hanging boughs,
Now, a ghost-like scene in the moonlight shows ! ,

A crash in the thicket : “ Ah, who goes there ?
I have startled, in passing, a drowsy hare,”
The fiddler thinks, as he onward hies,
When, sudden before him, two glaring eyes !

“ 'Tis a famishing hound, in the moon's pale beam,
How his white teeth gnash, and his eyeballs gleam !
And, pressing behind him there—one, two, three,
With their eyes like fireballs—may heaven help me !”

“ The wolves, oh, the wolves—a ravening brood,
And here am I helpless, alone in the wood !”
He cries in his terror, but vain is the call :
“ Is there none, is there none that 'll help me at all ?”

His hair bristles up, his vision grows dim,
With horror and fright ; he quakes in each limb ;
No succour is there, he is fated to die ;
The ravening pack to their victim draw nigh !

An oak tree so lofty, with leaves that are sere,
Supporteth the fiddler, when sudden you hear
A strain of wild melody—madness and mirth—
Such as never before was heard upon earth.

The tones are defiant, now pleading and mild,
Now stormy and raging, now weak as a child's ;
'Tis the voice of despair, but vain is the call—
“Is there none, is there none that 'll help me at all?”

The wolves gather round him with wondering gaze ;
The closer they press him the louder he plays ;
They circle their victim, whose fiddle alone
Must save him, else will they not leave him a bone.

'Tis a hellish concert, a ghastly scene !
He plays to the wolves with horror-struck mien ;
He plays for his life, for were he to end,
The wolves in a moment his body would rend !

With skill more than mortal he handles the bow—
Alas ! he hath never so fiddled till now !
And the tune ? 'tis the strangest and weirdest thing
That he plays !—oh God ! he has broken a string !

The hot sweat is starting at every pore—
He shudders—the wolves are behind and before.
A string gone : but no, he dare not refrain
From fiddling—and now he has broken the twain !

As when a beast's harried and hunted to death,
The wolves are upon him, he feels their hot breath ;
With eyes full of hunger, they leap in the snow,
While the tones of the fiddle get fainter and low.

And now, with the feebler and feebler sound,
The charm is unlocked that the wolves had bound ;
And the ravening monsters are ready to spring—
A crack ! and again he has broken a string !

“ One chord is still left, and this is the last ;
Should it snap, should it break, the struggle is past ! ”
The fiddler groans, and the tones that arise
From his fiddle are those of a man when he dies !

And as the sounds fainter and fainter fall,
The howling of wolves is heard above all ;
A thick mist is veiling the fiddler's eyes,
And his white lips tremble—he falls, he dies !

“ O Lord ! I commend my soul unto thee ! ”
He gasps, and is soon from all suffering free ;
A victim unconscious, he lies on the spot ;
Then a horrible howling—a flash—a shot !

One shot—now another—comes whizzing along,
With its message of death to the ravening throng ;
And to show that the aim of the marksmen is good,
Two wolves are lying there, bathed in their blood !

The others have fled—like the song of the spheres
Is the sound that now greeteth the fiddler's ears ;
For the clangour of bells, and the voices of men,
Wake him up unto life and to music again.



The Fall of Nicšićs.

*How the news was received at the Capital during
the Montenegrin war for liberty.*

IT was flashed along the wire to Cetinje's palace-wall :

“ From Nikola to the Princess, and the Montenegrins all :—

My standard it is floating from Onogost's castle high ;
My soldiers they have fought, and have won the victory ;
And Plamenatz, the leader, surrounded by a band
Of my bravest mountain-heroes, is sitting at my hand ;
And from the goblet quaffeth the rich and ruby wine.
Rejoice, ye Montenegrins, the victory is mine !
Rejoice, ye Montenegrins, proclaim it from the towers :
‘ Nikola's arms triumphant ! ’—the victory is ours ! ”

This message did Nikola send unto his Princess sweet,
That she might read it to the folk assembled in the
street—

That she might read it to the crowd that stood the
palace by ;
And for this end she boldly steps on to the balcony ;
But ere the message she could read, or ever well begin,
From all the people round about uprose a mighty din ;

The air was rent with loud huzzas, and with a deafening
roar ;

Nor ever in Cettinje's town was heard the like before.
Each mountaineer his pistol fired, and leapt into the
air—

The old, the young, the weak, the strong, were all
assembled there !

The grizzled man of fifty years, who forty years had been
A fighter for his country's flag, amid the crowd was
seen ;

And they whose beards were growing still, nor half-
developed yet,

Apprenticed to the bloody trade, among the crowd
were met.

They hug each other wildly there, they kiss each other's
cheek,

The grim and rugged veteran, and the juvenile so sleek ;
They shout and sing, they dance and leap, those moun-
tain-heroes bold ;

Nor ever yet in verse was sung, nor yet in words was
told

So deep a joy, so wild a glee, as in that mountain-hold,
When every man did muster forth, and e'en the lame
on sticks,

To hear the news—the joyful news—of the taking of
Nicsics !

The big bells of the monastery are gaily ringing now,
And the bells of many a watch-tower, upon the moun-
tain brow,

Repeat the joyful news, as the people come and go.
And hark ! the loud-voiced cannon sends Nikola's
message on

To all the mountain-villages : " The victory is won !"
You hear the mighty booming redoubled from each
peak,

And misty mountain summit ; nay, let the cannon
speak !

O'er Chevo's rocky wilderness let the joyful news
rebound,

And in Cermnitzka's dells, where the purple vines
abound,

And in Rieka's wild recesses, let the people hear the
sound !

The air was rent 'with loud huzzas, and with the
cannon's roar ;

Nor ever in Cetinje's town was heard the like before :
E'en lame and halt did hobble out, on crutches and on
sticks,

To hear the news—the joyful news—of the taking of
Nicsics !





The Dying Heroes.

[TRANSLATION OF "DIE STERBENDEN HELDEN" OF
UHLAND.]

THE Danes smote hard, and drove the Swedish
host

Unto the coast ;
There was a noise of chariots ; i' the moon's light
The swords gleamed bright ;
When on the field of blood all dying lay
The youthful Sven, and Ulf, the hero gray.

SVEN.

O sire ! so youthful and so strong, to die
Is agony !
Now, will my mother smooth these locks no more,
Ah, never more !
And from the tower my maid will look in vain
For me, her lover, to come back again !

ULF.

Yea, they will grieve ; but in their dreams, I ween,
We shall be seen ;
And when again they wake, the bitter smart
Will break their heart.
Then shall thy maid, at Odin's festive board,
Hand thee the cup, and thou shalt be her lord.

SVEN.

But I, O father, have begun a song—
The chords are strong—
The deeds of heroes, in the gray old time,
I've put in rhyme ;
Now hangs my harp forsaken on the tree,
And the chance wind awakes its melody !

ULF.

O Sven ! the splendour of Our Father's hall
Surpasseth all ;
He is almighty, and the great stars roll
At his control.
There 'mongst the heroes may'st thou seated be ;
There, harp in hand, take up thy melody.

SVEN.

O sire ! so youthful and so strong, to die
Is agony !
No deeds of prowess on the battle-field
Adorn my shield ;
And were I sat at Odin's festival,
Among the heroes I were least of all.

ULF.

O Sven ! one noble deed is worth a crowd,
It is allowed ;
And hast not thou, at thy dear country's need,
Here come to bleed ?
Now look ! the foe doth flee ; see yonder light—
'Tis Odin guides us to his palace bright !





A Legend of Marple Hall.

ON a sunny day of the early fall,
From the Irwell we came to the Etherow
stream ;

We stood on the terrace of Marple Hall,
And the land lay beautiful as a dream !—

With russet-brown woods, and green meadow-land,
And the tiny lake there, below, in the “dean,”
That so brightly gleamed, and the hills beyond,
No lovelier picture was ever yet seen !

And there, while we stood, on that autumn day,
By the hall of the Bradshaws, known to fame,
Whose windows reflected the sunny ray,
To our dreamy mind an old legend came—

A legend related of Marple Hall,
As to which, in *one* part, we know 'tis true ;
For the rest, who likes, can believe it all ;
But what we have “heard” we will tell to you.

There once was a “Bradshawe” of Marple Hall,
And he had a beautiful daughter gay ;
And this daughter in love she chanced to fall,
As to fall in love is a woman's way.

So she fell in love with a gallant knight,
(’Tis the old, old tale of a true love crossed) .
And she thought of her lover day and night,
(How many a sigh does a true love cost !)

Alas, for the lover ! alack, for the maid,
Who thought of that lover by day and night !
Her grim old father their wishes gainsaid,
And held *his* family in deep despite !

And swore of the thing he would make an end ;
And to compass it then on a plan did fall :
A smooth-writ message did he straightway send,
To bring the fond lover to Marple Hall.

And to Marple Hall the lover he came,
Who ventured that day where never before
He’d ventured, for all his wild heart was aflame ;
Nor slackened he rein till he reached the door !—

On full-blooded courser out-stripping the wind,
In rain and in darkness, the gallant had come
To her father’s hall, his true-love to find ;
And on darker night did no lover roam !

And the lady, I warrant, who loved him well,
She wished that her lover might there abide ;
Or that he would take her, with him to dwell—
Of a happy bridegroom the happy bride !

The feast was prepared, the gallant sat down,
The hearts of the lovers were filled with glee ;
’Twas the happiest hour they had ever known ;
But, alas, not a *second* hour had he !

. The banquet proceeds, when hark to the call
Of the old squire, who sits there at the head !
Calls the Bradshawe to him his seneschal,
And he biddeth him to saddle with speed !

Then horrible fears must the old carle feign,
Who trembling says : " On a night so stormy,
Were I to fare forth, in the darkness and rain,
I wot well it would be my last journey !"

" Ods, bods !" cries the squire, " will nobody bear
This message for me on to Romiley ?"
Then rose the gallant right up from his chair,
And to the squire he did make this reply :

" Though the night is hell-black, and rain poureth down
Till each road in the land is a river,
And my steed in the stable is spent and blown,
Your message I will duly deliver."

" Though I know not the perils that threaten,
Nor an inch of the road to Romiley,
By my troth, I will never be beaten,
Bold squire, so give me your message, I pray !"

And his steed, that's *smoking*, is saddled again,
The old seneschal he points him the way ;
To-horse at a bound, rides the gallant amain—
He rides forth, and he rides forth, *to this day !*—

He rides as a *ghost*, for lofty and steep
Is the bold cliff on which standeth the hall,
And people will tell how the horse took a leap
O'er the brink, that was fatal to rider and all !

And after long years, a skeleton tall
Was found, 'tis said, in the vale of the mere ;
For, *then*, where we look it was water all,
Though, now, so fresh the green meadows appear.

And so pleasant the woods around the hall—
You wonder, no doubt, if the story be true ;
But why should you ask : “ how could it befall ? ”
When they show you “ his spurs,” of a rusty hue !

For there they are hanging up in the hall—
The stirrups of iron—and this story, too !
Though we do not ourselves believe it all ;
But what we have “ heard ” we have told to you.

And after a while, doth the legend say,
The beautiful maid that with love did burn
For the gallant young knight, she pined away,
And died, while awaiting her lover's return !

Now, listen ! for yonder the Marple bells
Are chiming in cadence so soft and low ;
The red sun is setting behind the hills,
And all things are dim in the distance, now ;

And vainly the eye would endeavour to pierce
The veil of the mist, and the haze, around ;
So this fact remains of the tale we rehearse :
Two rusty stirrups in the mere were found !



Death and the Doctor.

[FROM THE GERMAN OF LESSING.]

WOULD you credit, brothers mine !
Yesterday, whilst drinking wine—
Drinking, perhaps, a little free—
Grim Death came, and spake to me !

Spake, and swung his scythe so near
That I quaked in mortal fear :
“ Out, away, thou drunken knave ;
Get thee to yon open grave ! ”

“ Be my friend, O Death, I pray,
Since we’ve met by chance to-day :
Look you ! here is purple wine ;
Drink a bumper here of mine ! ”

With a smile, Death took the cup,
Drank the wine, and drank it up ;
Then the goblet handed o’er,
Smiling as he smiled before.

Death, thought I, is quite fraternal,
When once more, with voice infernal :
“ Fool ! to think through juice of grape
E’er from me thou couldst escape ! ”

Then I begged of Death to know
I was Doctor So and So :
Patients' pains I cured, and aches ;
Would he spare me for their sakes ?

" Ah," said Death, " if that be true,
Live, but so I count on you—
Live on still, but do my will,
Then of drink thou'st have thy fill !"

" Oh, how sweet those words of thine ;
Bring they to this heart of mine
Strength and hope, and joy withal—
Death, I drink to thee and all !"

" Let me live on earth awhile,
Basking still in Bacchus' smile ;
Ne'er, while beats this heart of mine,
Let me want for love, or wine !"





Heraclitus and Democritus.

— alter
*Ridebat quoties à limine moverat unum
Protulerat pedem, flebat contrarius alter.*

JUVENAL.

HERACLITUS, Democritus,
Two famous Greeks were they
That looked upon this world of ours
In a wholly different way.

Heraclitus, the mournful sage,
Was almost always sighing ;
And seldom looked upon mankind
But he burst out a-crying.

Democritus, the merry soul,
As constantly was chaffing ;
And never thought about men's ways
But he burst out a-laughing.

Some say Heraclitus was right,
And think they have good reason
But, for myself, I think, in sooth,
A man *may* laugh in season.

While others praise Democritus,
The very prince of chaffers ;
“ Choose which you like, let us,” say they,
“ Still be among the laughers !”

And yet I think, in sober sooth,
As things are ordered here,
A man may have good cause to weep,
And shed the bitter tear.

When falsehood foul, and base chicane,
So often win the fight,
One well may say : can men be gay ?
Heraclitus was right !

When gold corrupts, and intrigue gains
And Envy wreaks her spite,
One well may say : can men be gay ?
Heraclitus was right !

When friends they fail, and loves prove false,
And treat you with despite,
One well may say : can men be gay ?
Heraclitus was right !

When Truth and Virtue walk in rags,
And prove their wretched plight,
One well may say : can men be gay ?
Heraclitus was right !

When Misery stalks through every land,
And makes so sad a sight,
One well may say : can men be gay ?
Heraclitus was right !

When like a football man is kicked
By Fortune, day and night,
One well may say : can men be gay ?
Heraclitus was right !

And yet I hold, when truth is told,
That there *is* cause for chaffing ;
And that a man may be excused
If sometimes he's found laughing.

When Fashion goes, and takes by th' nose
So many men and women ;
To keep your face, with any grace,
Were almost superhuman !

When men *ape* men so much they *prove*
What Darwin doth indite,
One well may say, in a laughing way :
Democritus was right !

When they that make the biggest din
Are sure to draw the crowd,
You seem to hear Democritus,
That laugheth long and loud.

And yet if love your heart should move
For all of human-kind,
You'll deem his chaff, and his loud laugh,
All wasted on the wind.

You'll think with tears of man's just fears—
Of human hopes o'erthrown ;
How brief all bliss, in a world like this—
How like a bubble blown !

Nay, as you go, some tears *must* flow,
Unless your heart be cold ;
For every day doth Chance waylay
Ten thousand, young and old !

And only *he*, it seems to me,
That weeps o'er human woes,
Should dare to laugh, or ever chaff,
The vanity that goes !





The Three Songs.

[FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND.]

GRIES Sifrid, the King, to his scalds in the hall :
“ Who'll sing me the song the sweetest of
all ?”

A bold youth stepped forth, with a haughty
stride,

His harp in his hand, his sword by his side :

“ Three songs do I know, and can sing them right,
But the first by thee is forgotten quite :

My brother, so fair, thou didst cruelly slay ;

Wouldst have me to sing thee that song to-day—

To-day, to-day—

Wouldst have me to sing thee that song to-day ?”

“ The second good song that I will sing right,

It entered my head on a stormy night :

Who murdered that brother so cruelly,

By the sword I carry, the same shall die !—

The same shall die !—

By the sword I carry, the same shall die !”

On the table his harp the harper laid,
And drew on the King his flashing blade ;
And the two fought long, and they both fought well,
Till the King on the floor of his palace fell !

Then a loud voice rings through the lofty hall :

“ The song I sing last is the sweetest of all,
For the oath that I swore I’ve made it good,
And the murderer lies in his own red blood !—

In his own red blood !

And the murderer lies in his own red blood !”





The Village Tree.

INSCRIBED TO T. C.



BRAVE old Beech by the village stands,
Where a bold bridge spans the river ;
With its stalwart trunk, and its hundred
hands,
You'd think it would stand for ever.

From the stream hard by hath it drawn for years
Rich nourishment, as you may know ;
And that is the reason so boldly it rears,
And so stalwart its trunk doth grow.

'Tis a spreading tree,* and its friendly arms
Have sheltered full many a crowd ;
And all who pass by are struck with its charms,
And are speaking its praises loud.

'Tis a spreading tree, and on many a day
Hath it sheltered from bitter blast
The waggoner cold, on his wintry way,
And the children to school that passed.

*The peculiar spreading character of the beech has not been overlooked by the older poets, witness Virgil, in his first eclogue : *Tityre, tu patula recubans sub tegmine fagi.*

'Tis a spreading tree, and on many a day
Hath it shaded from summer heat
The traveller tired, who hath passed that way,
And the boy with his blistered feet.

'Tis a spreading tree, with a hundred boughs,
That offer the pleasantest shade ;
And a friendly tree, as each villager knows,
For there, as a child, he has played—

Has played as a boy ; and then, as a youth,
All at night, in the tree's deep shade,
Hath poured out his love, and told the whole truth
To some rosy-cheeked village maid.

'Tis a friendly tree, as each maiden proves,
And a *whispering* tree, as well ;
For it whispers a "yes" to the man she loves,
Before she has had time to tell !

Did the tree know her mind before herself ?
Ah, I do not think that he did ;
Though she chose to say so, the wicked elf,
But the truth in the tree was hid !

For had he not listened, on many a night,
To the beating of her fond heart ;
And had he not heard how the maiden sighed,
When she and her lover must part ?

'Tis the favourite tree of maid and of youth ;
And a tree to old age that's dear ;
For the maiden it speaks, and telleth the truth,
And the weary may shelter here.

'Tis a tree that could whisper a thousand things ;
And if each green leaf had a tongue,
Not even the sweetest poet that sings
Could tempt us to listen so long.





The Shepherd.

TRANSLATION OF "DER SCHÄFER" OF UHLAND.

THE youthful shepherd, tall and fair,
He drove so near the royal tower
Him saw the royal maiden there,
And loved him from that hour.

And, sighing, thus she softly spoke :
" Oh, could I come to thee, my dear !
As white as snow thy gentle flock,
But love lies bleeding here."

The youthful shepherd thus replied :
" Oh, wouldst thou come to me, my dear,
That I might press that hand so white,
And kiss thy cheek so fair !"

And as, each morn, he meekly drove
His woolly flock the castle by,
Upon the turret, far above,
The maiden he did spy ;

And greeting her with friendly word :
" O welcome, the king's daughter fine !"
Her gentle answer soon he heard :
" I thank thee, shepherd mine !"

The winter sped, the spring, so fair,
Was blooming richer than before ;
The shepherd with his flock was there,
The maiden—never more."

Yet sadly thus on her he calls :
" O welcome, the king's daughter fine !"
A voice it issues from the walls :
" Adieu ! thou shepherd mine !"





The Lily Maid.

IN MEMORIAM R. F.

WITHIN a cottage, sheltered by a wood
Where whispering leaves a silvery
music made,
And where the wild bird reared its
callow brood,
Lived One whom I will call the Lily Maid.

Most lily-like her beauty, and her mild
And gentle mien could melt the heart most cold ;
Her's was a lily-beauty from a child,
While form and face were cast in Grecian mould.

My baby-hands caressed her ; I did feel,
Although an infant, something that was sweet,
Gracious, and beautiful about her steal
Into my heart that I may not repeat.

Nay, she was ever winsome with a child,
Since nought but tenderness her heart did fill ;
And she was lovely, and so angel-mild
That all around did bend unto her will.

A white rose bloomed beside "the cottage" door,
Which often I have seen, in summer weather,
As if with snow quite thickly covered o'er ;
The lily and the rose did bloom together.

But far the lovelier was the lily *there*,
And sweeter, sweeter by a thousand times ;
A most surpassing fragrance filled the air,
And a rare brightness for these cloudy climes.

And One, who entered, *felt* the sweetness there—
(So rich was he his wealth could not be told)
Felt the full charm of loveliness so rare,
And of a goodness that was more than gold.

Woodyed her, and won, and took the Lily Maid
From her low cottage to his lofty hall ;
Nor at the prospect was she aught dismayed ;
Conscious of worth, she felt no fear at all.

Nor yet was she blown-out with foolish pride,
But bore herself with gentle dignity ;
No change she knew, although a rich man's bride,
None that were poor would she pass heedless by.

But ever was she ready, heart and hand,
To help the helpless, pity the forlorn ;
And widely, deeply loved through all the land,
E'en her own lofty station did adorn.

Reading a lesson to the shallow proud,
Of purest love, and sweet humility ;
Feeling for them we term "the vulgar crowd,"
And ever full of Christian charity.

Preaching to "preachers" that it is not well
To preach, "as from a height," to those below ;
But gently preaching, in a voice so still,
That only they might hear who wished to know.

"Lip-sermons" little profit them that hear :
If, preaching "humbleness," thyself art "high,"
O preacher proud ! I beg thou wilt forbear ;
Thou preachest to the winds that whistle by.

Not in weak *words* did preach, my lady, no ;
But in her act and deed the lesson proved ;
Hence by all men was she esteemèd so,
Hence of her people, here, so deeply loved.

And loved and honoured in her native vale,
Hope told us she would live for many years ;
But Hope too oft doth "tell a flattering tale"—
Too oft deceiveth him that, listening, hears.

Dead is the "Lily Maid" of other days !
Dead is the "Lady of the Castle," high !
No more we meet, upon the public ways,
Her well-known carriage, as it rolleth by.

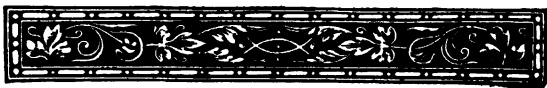
Her face, her form, no longer we shall see,
That told the tale of her past loveliness ;
And they who fed upon her charity
Must to another tell their sad distress.

No mistress in the park, or in the hall ;
The gentle voice is silent, now, for aye ;
No wife respondeth to her husband's call :
Nor shall they meet again, by night or day !

O lady ! who art gone before thy time !
O lovely Lily Maid of other years !
O honoured sister ! callèd in thy prime ;
More would I write, but cannot write for tears !

But sweet thy memory as the lily fair ;
And we would cast *one* flower upon thy tomb ;
Take, then, this lily, till we meet thee there ;
'Tis but a little later that we come !





The Soldier's Funeral.*

Ille dolet vere, qui sine teste dolet.



HEAR the beat of muffled drum,
I see by the church an open grave ;
Whom bear they to his narrow home?
Is it some soldier-hero brave ?

A soldier do they bring, indeed ;
But one who lived unknown to fame,
Who never yet in war did bleed,
Nor ever yet acquired "a name."

In city hospital so lone,
Unfriended, he had suffered long,
And there was heard his latest moan,
Amid a fever-stricken throng !

Not one was by who held him dear—
His native vale was far away—
Not one was seen to shed a tear
Over his cold and lifeless clay !

*See Emma von Nindorf's "Soldaten-Leiche."

And yet a bride is waiting there,
Within the valley far remote —
A youthful maiden, passing fair,
Awaiteth one that *cometh not* !

And on her cheek the rose so red
Shall change to white when she shall know
That he whom she hath loved is dead,
And by the city sleepeth now !





The Two Doors—Life and Death.

IN at this door went the Newly-Married ;
Out at that door a cold corpse was carried !
In at this door went a blushing young Bride ;
While out at that door went One who had died !

In here passed a Bride, on her bridal morn ;
Out there passed a Man whom disease had worn !

While in at this door passed One that was fair,
There passed out at that One wrinkled with care !

While in at this door went a Maid, full of charms ;
Who passed out at that was but " food for the worms !"

In at this door came a handsome young " groom ;"
While out at that door went One to his tomb !

In at this door passed the Brave and the Strong ;
But He who passed out had suffered for long !

While in at this door came One full of life,
Who passed out at that had ceased from all strife !

To the Man who passed in, all his " life " was *before* ;
But the Man who passed out, he'll " battle " no more !

This Life here below, how vain and how short !
And Man, what is he, but of Fortune the sport !

All filled with his "plans," and blown out with pride,
He's here—but, the next day, Death calls him aside—

Death calls him aside, and we see him no more ;
There' an end of *his* "plans," but *we* plan as before—

We plan as before, nor think we of Death,
Till each, in his turn, is puffed out by a breath !

O God ! dost thou hear me ? to Thee I do cry ;
Is't better, oh, tell me, to live or to die ?

If to spheres that are brighter men's souls ever tend,
Oh, thither who would not right speedily wend !

Dear Faith, thou art laggard ; oh, hasten away !
Let not a poor Heart bleed to death by the way !

She comes, and she whispers : "All patiently wait,
To Him 't shall be opened who knocks at the Gate !

But only the pure and the lowly of heart,
Partaketh of peace, and in heaven hath part !"



A Bleeding Heart.

[INSCRIBED TO H. W., FROM WHOSE LIFE THE FOLLOWING
IS "A TRUE LEAF."]



LOVED a little maiden well—
An innocent little maid,
With blue eyes, and bright hair that fell
In tresses round her head.

And in her own sweet, innocent way,
I know she loved *me*, too ;
Although she never a word did say,
I know she loved me true.

I knew it because she blushed so deep,
Whenever I went or came ;
I knew it because her love did keep
Her maiden cheeks aflame.

I knew it because her heart did beat
More quick when I was nigh ;
I knew it because, whene'er we'd meet,
It gleamed in her blue eye.

I knew it because, in every tone,
Though never of *love* spake she,
Her love for me it was clearly shown—
She loved me exceedingly.

Did ever a maiden need to speak?
Ah, I wot not so, indeed;
For love that is true all *words* are weak,
And the man that runs may read!

But now there lies a gulf between
This lovely maid and me;
And, sad, I think on *what hath been*,
And *what must never be*!

Ah, little the world would care to know
How misery came to me;
And I, 'mid thorns, must bleeding go,
Nor look for sympathy.

Full many a cross is outward borne
By people of my kin;
But never a cross have I yet worn
That was not found *within*!

Not one of that heedless, hurrying crowd
Believes in a "broken heart;"
Nor unless you lift your voice full loud,
Will the blind world take your part.

A man may suffer a cruel wrong ;
A maid to her grave may go ;
But still the crowd will hurry along,
And people will never know !

A man may fall stark dead in the street,
Yet so busy th' world is now,
That almost the very next man you meet,
If asked, he will hardly know !

At noon, as I passed thro' the bustling town,
One sank in the crowd as dead ;
But the town-folk still passed up and down,
And never a word was said !

One tender Heart did I notice there,
That bled with a brother's pain ;
While others had only stopped to stare,
He lifted th' man up again.

And haply some tender Soul shall reach
A brotherly hand to me ;
Or haply a poet the world may teach,
And win me its sympathy.

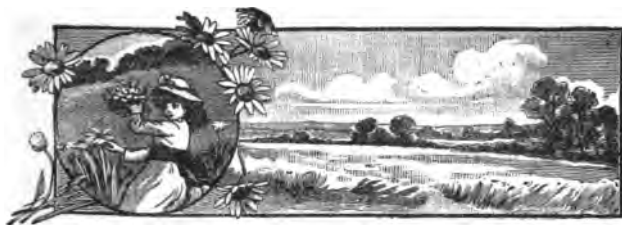
Some poet may lift his sweet voice loud,
And give to the world a song,
To startle and stir e'en the busy crowd,
With sorrow so deep and strong !

And surely the Poet's mission here's
The noblest mission of all ;
For the poet counteth all the tears
From grief-worn eyes that fall !

In the depths of his tender heart, he feels
The sorrows of every one
In shadow that walks, or weeping kneels,
While the heedless crowd pass on !

He scattereth flowers, both sweet and gay,
Upon many a dreary road ;
And he brighteneth much the weary way—
He lighteneth the heavy load !





Payment in Kind.



BLUE-EYED Beauty, with the flaxen curls,
In which the tiny Cupids hidden lie !

I crave a kiss, dear paragon of girls !—

One kiss, I pray, before we say good-bye !

Or I'll kiss thee, for my most passionate soul

Is seized with hunger at thy loveliness,

And the deep yearning brooketh no control ;

Kiss thee I *must* ; but thou shalt have redress—

For see ! my garden beds are full of flowers,

Rich-hued and glowing : here is recompense.

Mark these, how fragrant, freshened by the showers ;

But those are brighter, there, beside the fence.

“ O splendid blooms ! stay, blue-eyed Blonde, no more :

Thy little hands are filled, my debt is paid !”—

Another kiss—prolonged to half a score ;

Again expectant stands the little maid :—

Again expectant, but with both hands full,

While all the “rogue” is gleaming in her eyes :—

Each precious flower, my darling, would I cull,

But that the balance still against me lies ;

And still *must* lie : to taste those lips of thine
Is to plunge deeper, deeper into debt,
So sweet thy breath, so rapturous, so divine ;
By heaven, I feel its honeyed freshness yet !

In such sweet barter could I spend the time,
Did flowers survive, and did thy beauty last ;
But winter comes, and brings the snow and rime,
And soon thy splendid beauty will have passed !

Ah, *this* it is that makes the poet cling,
With the deep fervour of his passionate soul,
To all that's fair, and for each lovely thing
Feel the fond yearning that brooks no control.

By *him* the current of the so-called "Stream
Of Time " is felt ; *he* sees the land recede
(Unlike the crowd, that walk as in a dream)
But *where* we go, he knoweth not, indeed !

In the eternal night, a moment's flash :
Such is our life, as seen by poet-eyes ;
But if the thought the spirits with sadness dash,
Yet is there compensation for the wise.

As each bright thing, below, is brighter seen,
In a dark setting, so the thoughtful mind
With deeper gust doth taste each joy, I ween,
Knowing each joy is of so *brief* a kind.

But this is preaching ; O sweet Fairy, I
Thank thee, once more, with an o'erflowing heart ;
For in the treasure-house of memory
Thine angel-image have I set apart.

A thousand thanks, my Blue-eyed Angel ! yes,
I owe thee thanks for inspiration given ;
Since I have looked upon thy loveliness,
The scene below hath changed from Earth to
Heaven !

Yon woods are greener, and that bending sky,
Whose azure is not deeper than thine eyes,
Is particoloured with a pageantry
For ever changing, with a thousand dyes.

The birds sing louder, and more freely far,
These "ground-flowers" bloom more brightly at
my feet,
My heart is richer, wealthier—a new star,
When evening comes, shall my glad vision greet !

Once more, adieu ! we may not meet again,
But we *have* met ; and I to thee shall owe
A world, a world, if I could make it plain—
But all is inarticulate here below.

I can but mutter, mutter, what I feel ;—
But haply, darling, in a far-off year,
Heaven will vouchsafe me the full power to tell
What now I prove, but cannot make appear.



Journey by Night.

[FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND.]

INTO the gloomy land I ride,
No light of moon or star to guide,—
How bitter blows the wind !
Here have I journeyed many a day,
When golden sunshine lit the way,
And the breeze was soft and kind.

I ride the gloomy garden by,
The naked trees are tossing high,
The searèd leaf doth fall.
Here, 'mid the roses, oft I strayed
With her I loved, the darling Maid,
When love was all in all.

Extinguished is the sunlight now,
The roses long have ceased to blow,—
My love is lowly laid !
I ride into the gloomy land,
'Mid winter's storm, no light at hand,
Enwrapped within my plaid.



Where Sunshine has been,

OR THE MELANCHOLY MAN.

——— *Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria ;* ———

—DANTE.

HOW vain this little life, beneath the sun !
How brief all Pleasure, since the world
begun !

Though scarce one half of Life's short lease
hath run,

How much of all that I have loved is gone !
A thousand spots, where once bright joys did bloom,
Are desert now, or hid in midnight gloom ;
And I am strange where once I was at home !

I knew a garden, full of lovely flowers,
Where bees made honey, and all gracious Powers
Did fondly watch—where, fed by sun and showers,
Herb *True-love* bloomed through all the golden hours,
And sweet birds warbled in the pleasant bowers ;
'Tis *gone*, the garden all so bright with flowers ;
And choked with weeds that once-loved plot of ours !

My Maid was fair, of all fair maids the queen ;
She loved me well—now "oceans roll between !"
I had a Friend, a much-loved friend, I ween ;
But he is dead, and now his grave is green—
In yonder church-yard may his name be seen ;
And o'er it lichens soon shall weave a screen,
And keep, in their own way, his memory *green* !*

One I knew well who, full of joy and pride,
Launched his trim bark on Life's great ocean wide ;
Nor went alone, he took with him a bride ;
In one brief year, he sickened and he died—
One did I know ? I knew a crowd beside !
A thousand spots are bare that once were green,
And where the sun shone there's no sunshine seen !

How many a nook, within this narrow bound,
Once held by "friends," to me familiar ground,
Is closed to me, since by a "stranger" owned ;
Where one, in other years, a welcome found,
There's now *no* welcome, but—a barking hound !
A thousand spots are bare that once were green,
And where the sun shone there's no sunshine seen !

Once, Hope, full-handed, came and beckoned : " On !"
Full sweet her mien and mild : " Behold my son,"
She said, " the prize, the guerdon to be won :
Here will I crown thee, when thy work is done !"
With Fate I strove, but ah, 'twas Fate that won !
A thousand spots are bare that once were green,
And where the sun shone there's no sunshine seen !

*Alluding to the " In Memoriam " Tablet when covered with lichen growths.

Nature remains (with Truth) unto the last :
Parent benign ! oh, let me, weary, cast
My head upon thy bosom ! 'mid the waste,
So cold and drear, of loveless hearts I'll taste
The tranquil joys which still in store thou hast
For them that love thee ! O blest Mother, *now*,
I feel thy sweet calm on my fevered brow !





The Honey in the Cup.

NONE thing is better yet than fame,
And wealth 'tis far above ;
I claim not those, but this I claim :
A share of human love !

I seek to sit beside a hearth
Where they alone shall gather
Who long have proved each other's worth,
Through fair and stormy weather —

To know that I am one of these—
To feel, and to believe
That if I died on land, or seas,
These faithful ones would grieve !

This is the love that bears us up,
Amid a world of strife ;
It is the honey in the cup—
The mixed cup of life !



The Unremembered.

I THOUGHT upon the unremembered Brave—
Of all the *nameless* Heroes who have died,
And long have mouldered in the silent grave,
Erst snatched away in their full manhood's pride.

I thought upon the unremembered Wise
That through the uncounted ages have writ on,
Poor and unheeded, amid tears and sighs,
And now are wrapt in cold oblivion.

I thought upon the unremembered Good
Who gave their lives unto the cause of Truth,
Or to the cause of Freedom, and whose blood
Was spilt in battle in their bloom of youth.

I thought upon the unremembered crowd
Who on the earth have lived and suffered long—
Who their whole lives to sacrifice have vowed,
Nor murmured once against the cruel wrong.

Of them I thought (and they are many still
In this cold world) whose hearts of tenderness
Were ruthless broken by the strong of will—
Broken and torn, and there was no redress.

Of the forgotten Good, and Wise, and Brave,
Born in this world, and buried here, I thought,
Till, to my sense, Earth seemed *one mighty Grave*,
So deep upon my spirit had it wrought !

Who shall survive the wreck of things below ?
Shall I be heard of in a few short years,
When thousands yet, to whom all heads did bow,
Are unremembered in this "vale of tears ?"

In the Eternal Silence, the faint hum
Of these so tiny insects, that are blown
Through the free air, as loud is as the tongue
Of the most eloquent orator ever known !

And dost thou smile at their brief term of hours ;
And call them "short-lived things," those tiny fleas !
Is their brief life much shorter, then, than ours,
In the vast measure of the Eternities ?

Mysterious world ! yet reverent would I bow
To the All-seeing and All-knowing One.
Worship we *must*, and wonder, as we go,
Until our little term of life is run.



The Gloomy Valley.

[The following is but a very slightly "coloured" description of a valley actually existing, viz., the *Valea stea*, in the Biharian mountains of Hungary (one of the Carpathian range). In this gloomy gorge, even in the height of summer, the sun is to be seen for only a few hours at mid-day. The botany of the place, as described below, is, so far as it goes, strictly accurate.]

FROM yonder vale, on summer's longest day,
The cheerful sun is hardly to be seen !
Darkness Cimmerian, all the winter through,
Broods o'er the valley, silent and forlorn !
Though silent now, yet vocal when wild tempests rage
Upon Biharian heights—when the loud storm
Breaks o'er the hills, and mighty torrents pour
Their turbid floods, in thunder, o'er the cliffs ;
Or tear huge blocks from the steep mountain-side ;
Or pines (uprooted, branch and stem) hurl down,
With crash, into the valley, vocal *then* ;
But silent *now*, and peaceful !

The bright sun,
That takes his noon-day peep o' the gloomy vale
Let's follow, while we may.

Behold the scene—
A scene how varied ! *Beauty in eclipse !*
Infinite loveliness amid the gloom !
O'er mossy rocks the alpine clematis *

* *Clematis alpina*, or *Atragene alpina*.

Creeps here, how softly ! and how lovingly
Intwines itself around the willows there—
(Dwarf willows of the mountain, tiny trees
That bear the bitter storms unflinchingly ;)
And, as it creeps, with what a wealth of bloom
It clothes the mountain-side ! Note thou, again,
Where, from the steep, the lovely stonebreak hangs, **
As if with rime-frost thickly crusted o'er.
And many a form of plant-life, passing strange,
Or beautiful (long sought in vain) is here,
To glad thy wondering eyes. Behold, deep-glowing
there,
The alpine-rose, * * the darling of the hills !

Beauty, in God's bright world, is *everywhere* !
Here, in this gloomy valley, where the sun
But barely peeps on summer's longest day,
Beauty still breeds ! Over the naked rocks
The curious lichen weaves its coloured screen ;
And green and golden mosses, ferns, and flowers,
Pale or deep-hued, spring forth, as if in joy !

So in our *human* world—in this sad "vale of tears,"
No nook so gloomy, but the cheerful sun
Of Love may penetrate ! no soil so poor,
But things of beauty there may spring and breed,
And cover o'er the barrenness of our lives !

** *Saxifraga*, various encrusted species.

* * *Rhododendron hirsutum*, *R. ferrugineum*, and the bastard form,
R. intermedium.



Lines on the Funeral of J. N.,

[A DISTINGUISHED BOTANIST, AND AN INTIMATE
FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR.]

Oh ——— ! the man, the brother !
And art thou gone, and gone for ever ?
And hast thou crossed that unknown river,
 Life's dreary bound ?
Like thee, where shall I find another,
 The world around ? *Burns.*

When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions. *Shakespeare (Hamlet).*

THE day was bright, yet cold—an autumn day—
Autumn the time, and autumn for our hearts !
Whose hopes had fall'n as leaves that strew
the woods,

So thick, so deep ! He now, whom of all men
On earth we loved, to the cold grave was borne.
No tears we shed—*that* healing fount had dried.
Whose grief sits light *may* weep, and with their tears,
Water the sod—each sod—that covers o'er
A form they loved ; but far below the depth
Of tears the grief which wrung our hearts that day.

“Dust unto dust, ashes to ashes !” hear !
Was never better human mould closed in
By mould so cold, so cold !

Yet let him lie ! upon the heights of this,
His native Stansfield,* let the good man rest !
The hills that gave him to us, let them take
Their best gift back !—'Tis meet ! Who could deny
His own dear mountains calling back *their own* !

Yea, let him rest here on the heights which he
So oft hath clomb, in deep though quiet joy,
(Through near th' allotted span of this our 'life).
Who shall express that joy ? Nature to *him*
Was ever, ever blooming ! Ah, to tell
The rapture that, even in winter's depth,
To him could yield each tiny, glistening moss,
Or lichen grey, clothing the barren rock !

What nook of these our vales
Hath he not peeped in—peeped, nay closely scanned ?
At what clear spring hath he not bent and drank ?
Beside what stream, or through what clough hath he
Not roved, at his own gentle pace, and there
Ta'en note of plant-life in its tiniest forms ?
What hill or knoll hath he not clomb, early
Or late, or at mid-day, in rain or shine ?

And is it *ended* ? Must he nevermore
Renew those pleasures ? Were those pure delights
The last, the *very* last ?

The call is vain !
Beyond the veil—beyond we cannot pierce ;
The mighty mystery baffles mortal ken !

* Township of Stansfield, W. R. of York.

Say this, in hope : " His gentle spirit passed
Into that pure and unknown world of love
Where injury cannot come !

And he *was* gentle ; yea, in very sooth,
" The meekest soul that e'er did lift up eye."

His heart had bled

" To work the woe of any living thing !"

Shelter he built against the bitter winds
Of chance ; it fell, and yet no murmur passed
His lips. The blast he meekly bore, nor e'er
Dug, grovelling low, in " Mammon's dirty mine !"

Ah, what a lesson for a time like ours,
When lust of wealth turns men to ravening wolves,
And human breasts bear stones in place of hearts !
Shine sweetly, Sun, upon this honoured grave !
Tread softly ye upon his kindly mould !
And raise a Tablet* that the child may ask :
" For whom ?" and learn that *Truth* and *Gentleness* have
lived !

*The "Tablet" was afterwards "raised," by public subscription, in
J. N.'s native town.



We're only Killing Time!

THE space how small, how brief and short the span,

In Time's domain, that Heaven allots to Man !
For threescore years he strives her laws to scan ;
For threescore years he seeks the mighty Plan
To fathom, and to pierce ; but ere he gain
A *glimpse* of this, he sinks to earth again,
Whence first he sprung ! The *How* he, perhaps, will find ;

The *Why* is known but to th' Eternal Mind !
Who even *ask* are few ; the most are blind
And deaf to the vast world of eye and ear ;
And wonder, if at all, why—they are here !
But, being here, they seek to "*kill the time* !"
You listen still, and hear the Foolish chime,
In chorus full : " We're only killing Time !"

One plays at cards, at croquet, or at bowls ;
Or, trifling still, the ball at cricket rolls.
Another throws the dice ; and these engage
At billiards ; and others again will wage,
In other ways, the war against Old Time.
" We only seek " you hear the Foolish chime,
In chorus full : " We seek to kill Old Time !"

Ye Fools ! would ye kill Time ? 'Tis Time that kills
Me and yourselves, and every graveyard fills
As soon as opened ! Nay, there are that have
No kith or kin but such as in the grave
Lie mouldering. Alas, Time flies too fast ;
And killeth *all* apace ! Is not thy Past
Like mine ? Can'st count the number of thy lost
And buried ones ? Like me, dost thou not tread
Within the populous City of the Dead,
And note familiar names upon each tomb ;
And question to thyself if more at home
In that *dead* city or the *living* one—
The breathing city, with its thousand cries ;
And yet where, almost every hour, there dies
One like thyself—a victim to Old Time ?
And still thou cry'st, and still the Foolish chime,
In chorus full : " We're only killing Time ! "

Time flies too fast ! " Ah me ! " vain Woman cries,
On whose smooth brow Time, as he onward hies,
Doth write his hated wrinkles, silv'ring her hair,
Once of a raven blackness ; blank despair
Possesses her ; Time robs her of each charm,
Relentlessly, and fills her with alarm.
And still you hear her foolish sisters chime,
In chorus full : " We're only killing Time ! "

" Alas ! " you hear *him* sigh, who seeks to climb
The Hill of Fame, " how swiftly does the time
Speed on ! Weeks, months, and years they pass away,
With silent lapse, and seem but as a day !

The Thought I bore hath made but half its way,
And yet my locks have turned to silvery grey ;
Death beckons me, and I must soon away !
And still I hear—you hear—the Foolish chime,
In chorus full : " We're only killing Time ! "

Could ye kill Time, the victory were not small ;
In vain to conquer Him that conquers all
Ye seek. Not wisest mortals under heaven—
Not to earth's noblest heroes is it given,
In such a strife, such victory to win.
How then can each poor, puny mannikin—
A crawling insect on this earthly ball—
Presume to conquer Him that conquers all ?
And yet I hear—you hear—the Foolish chime,
In chorus full : " We're only killing Time ! "





Mammonville ;

THE LARGEST CITY IN THE WORLD.

(A poem in " starry " fragments).

WE read, in histories old, of " Golden Calves "
Devoutly worshipped by God's chosen
folk ;

Whereat we wonder, and exclaim : what
slaves

To put their necks into the Devil's yoke !

We wonder and exclaim : could such things be ?

Must we believe the things that here are told ?

Could these proud men so humbly bow the knee

Unto a calf that was composed of gold ?

This did I doubt myself, till, 't' other day,

Passing a city—call it Mammonville !

I spied a monster crowd, along the way ;

And what they did there I will try to tell.

A monster city, truly, is this Mammonville,

The very largest city that I know ;

Its pious people all its streets do fill,

While prone upon their knees they fall full low

Before an image of the mighty God,
 (That is to say, *the* God of Mammonville !)—
 Young men and maidens kneel, while even old men
 nod,
 And the whole place with prayer and praise they fill—

A deafening sound, that in full volume rolled
 Into the caves of my astonished ears :
 What did I see ? a mighty Calf of Gold,
 And folk before it, hymning all the years !

* * * * *

The scene before me was great Mammonville :
This is the form of worship practised there ;
 And these loud songs and hymns they go on still—
 All through the day loud voices fill the air !

* * * * *

The “ Men that bear the muckrake ” constantly,
 (See Bunyan’s book, that reads so quaint and bold)
 Here, in this town, you’ll see, if you go by,
 In thousands, busy raking up their gold !

Their eyes up to God’s sun they never raise ;
 Upon this earth, like unto th’ worms, they crawl ;
 The Mammon-god is the one God *they* praise,
 For “ the great God ” they have no praise at all !

* * * * *

Had Milton his great masterpiece penned here ;
 Had Avon’s bard here tuned his heavenly reed ;
 The world had lost John’s “ Paradise ” I fear,
 And Will had “ lost his labour ” here, indeed !

* * * * *



By the Little Church in the Valley.

IN AUTUMN.

BY this church, all ivy-grown,
Sleepeth One whom I have known—
One who perished in his prime ;
Ah, how much before his time !

While I linger by his tomb,
In the sober afternoon,
Sadly I recall the time
When I saw him in his prime :

Fair he was, and bright and free,
Truthful, open, as could be ;
Candour sat upon his face—
All his person full of grace !

Should'st thou ask the reason why
He hath come so soon to die,
Though I loved him long and well,
The whole truth to thee I'll tell.

Though his memory is dear,
Though I shed the bitter tear,
Standing by his tombstone, here,
I will answer without fear.

He who lies beneath this stone,
And whom I so long have known,
Dissipated, many years
Kept his family in tears.

Ah, they suffered, as I know ;
Few have had to suffer so ;
How, then, could they heave a sigh,
When at length he came to die ?

Die he must, fell Passion's slave,
That for *drink* did ever crave ;
None could snatch him, or could save ;
Thus he went unto his grave—

Thus he went, but not *alone* ;
Ah, how many I have known,
Noble spirits in their prime,
Who have gone before their time !

Half the promise of this vale
(Might I tell the bitter tale)
Like my friend have lived, and died
Suddenly, in manhood's pride !

Fondly had I wished to see
Living to maturity
Many a one that I could name,
Who hath died a death of shame.

With them had I hoped to spend,
Nearing to my journey's end,
Quiet hours of thoughtful joy,
Whom I knew while yet a boy—

Whom I knew, and loved so well,
As my beating heart must tell ;
But they sought an early tomb,
And I wander amid gloom.

Every churchyard, here, is strown
With the people I have known ;
Everywhere I meet the ghost
Of some friend whom I have lost !—

Lost, and yet so young in years !
Can'st thou wonder that the tears
Chase each other down my cheek,
While, for grief, I scarce can speak !

Let me linger while I may,
On this quiet autumn day ;
Let me still recall with tears
Them I've known in other years.

Let me temper, here, my heart
With soft Pity's tender smart ;
And still think of them that die
With a tear-bemoistened eye !



The Serenade.

[AFTER UHLAND.]



HUSH ! a sweet voice sings to me ;
What melody is that ?
Dear mother, see who it may be
That singeth here so late."

" I nothing hear, my child, or see ;
O sweetly slumber on !
For none would sing thus late to thee,
Thou poor and suffering one ! "

" 'Twas then no *earthly* melody
That made my heart so light ;
It was the angels calling me :
O mother sweet, good night ! "



Unreported.

[THE STORY OF A WINTER NIGHT.]



TELL the story of a Girl of Shame,
As I received it from a passer-by
Whom late I met, as through the town I came,
Journeying by night beneath a wintry sky.—

“A Girl of Shame!” dost shudder? thou mayst well!
But then *I* never saw her, never knew
The miserable maiden, cannot tell
Even her name; and yet the tale is true.

The tale is true, although 'twas never blown
About the city: nobody was by,
Save one poor, fallen sister; she alone,
Of all God's creatures, saw the woman die.

A starry night of winter, bitter cold;
No moon, or almost none; in the half light
What do I see? (so was the story told)
I see a sister in the saddest plight.

Sad plight, indeed ! upon the frozen ground
Prostrate she lay, all helpless and alone ;
And bleeding from some invisible wound—
Almost too weak to utter a feeble moan.

There had she fallen, even where she lay,
Upon the hard stones of the stony path.
Some " fit " had overta'en her, by the way,
And there she breathed away her latest breath.

She suddenly died beside a Christian door
That never opened once to let her in :
" I'll never open to a cursed —— ;
Nor any such ! " exclaimed the man within.

And all the while, in heaven's blue vault above,
Shone the chaste stars ; and those Eternal Eyes
Gazed on the scene ! O God, so full of love !
What life awaits one that so cruelly dies ?

No door would open to this Child of Sin,
Upon a night of winter, bitter-cold ;
Although the fires did brightly glow within,
Where she craved one hour's shelter, I am told.

One single light in all the silent street !
" One blessed light," haply the creature said
To her lone self ; " perhaps there a friend I'll meet—
At least a pallet for my weary head."

" Oh, help ! I die, I cannot reach the door ;
And not one soul, at this late hour, is nigh ! "
She staggers—falls, full prone upon the floor,
And only one poor sister saw her die !—

One fallen sister saw the fearful death
Of her who in that hour was made to feel
That when Death meets us on the sinful path
One only court is open for appeal !

And whilst Earth's doors were closed, O God ! didst
Thou—

Didst Thou, too, close upon her Heaven's gate ?
Dost pity them that lead such lives below ;
Or, when they knock at *Thy* door, cry : “ Too late ? ”





In the Spring.

[AFTER UHLAND.]

THE winds are blowing so soft and light ;
They rustle and rustle by day and night,
And weave the robes of Spring :

O breath divine ! O heavenly tones !
Cease, then, poor Heart, O cease thy moans,
Whilst yonder grove doth ring !

The land is lovelier every day,
With flowers that laugh upon the way,
And never cease to bloom !

Whilst Joy is romping high and low,
I prithee, poor Heart, forget thy woe,
And into the sunlight come !



The Three Sisters.

[INSCRIBED TO THE SAME.]



KNOW a moorland-valley green,
Where winds are ever blowing—
Where down the hill the mountain-stream
Doth never cease its flowing.

I know a cottage in that vale—
A very modest dwelling,
But where affection doth not fail,
And the love is past all telling !
And when my heart is running dry,
Or lacks the kindlier juices,
That cottage rises in my eye,
And every fountain looses ;
For I see there Three Sisters fair,
With *one* heart running through them,
(If you loved one, I do declare
The *three* you'd have to woo them !)

Oh, sweet to me it is to see
If but a harsh word's spoken
To one, in jest, that all the three
Are equally heart-broken !

A picture of more solid worth
I never yet have found it ;
Nor would you find it on this earth,
If you should travel round it.

Sweet sisterhood ! when I compare
The world's exceeding meanness,
I find your cot a contrast rare—
Amid the waste a greenness,

A well-spring of affection true—
A fountain never failing,
Whereat I drink, and drink anew,
Whenever I am ailing !





In Memoriam.

THE REV. W. A. O'CONOR, B.A.

MARCH 23, 1887.

*Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
Tam cari capitis ?*

—HOR.



TRANSCENDENT Soul ! ah, whither dost thou
fare,

Freed from the clagging clay ? Unto what
bourne,

After its sojourn amid gloom and care,
And bitter strife, does the clear spirit return ?

O noble Heart ! whose every pulse did beat
Accordant with the Right, and with the True—
Following thy Master with unwearied feet—
Following thy Master sweet, " the blessed Jew !"

O subtle Sprite and keen ! whose vision clear
Pierced through the moral fog on men that lies—
Though meek yet bold, still speaking without fear,
Shaking the cobwebs of old sophistries !

O gentle Heart ! that heard'st the wailing cry
Of thousands who, amid the grime and gloom
Of dingy cities, live in misery
Unto the bitter end—an early tomb !

Farewell ! dear Spirit, high and noble Friend !
Most eloquent Voice, now silent in the tomb !
Farewell ! bright Spirit ; whither thou dost wend,
There let me follow, when my time hath come.





The Hills and Vales of T——.



O H, dear to me the hills of T—— !
Her vales so green and fair,
And hanging woods, I *always* see ;
They make a picture rare •

That on my heart engraven lies,
Nor ever yet shall fade !
The hills that mount into the skies,
And each sweet woodland glade,

Where grow the lovely lady-fern
And shield-fern, still I see ;
And many a moorland clough and burn,
Familiar to me—

Where thousand faery water-breaks
Do make a murmuring noise ;
And many a tiny pool and lake
In shady coolness lies—

Where, 'mid the shelving rocks, you meet
Full many a lovely plant—
The hard-fern, mountain-fern so sweet,
And every fern you want—

Where, shaded by the cliffs, you see,
In many a cool recess,
The tufted mosses, growing free,
In all their loveliness.

Amid the fever of my life,
I feel their *coolness* still ;
From out the tumult and the strife
I come, and climb the hill ;—

I wander where in music breaks
The waterfall for ever ;
I wade the clough, its pools and lakes,
To where it joins the river.

I seek the wild-rasp in the wood,
The strawberry also ;
I pluck the bramble-fruit so good,
(But later, as you know.)

I gather hips and haws again ;
I rob the rowan tree
Of its ripe fruit, and shoot amain
The berries, one, two, three,

With hollow kex, that from its stem
My "mate" had cut before ;
And now the paper boat must swim—
I shove it from the shore ;

I launch it on a "stormy sea,"
That's fully two feet wide ;
And watch its "passage" anxiously
From one to t'other side !

I gather wildlings in the grove,
With flowers of every hue ;
I gather all the flowers I love,
As I was wont to do.

I see the purple lilac hang
Its fragrant blooms so high,
That I must feel a bitter pang
To have to pass it by !

I see the "stately foxglove" rise
In many a shady dell ;
I see the speedwell's heavenly eyes
Beside the mossy well.

I climb the heights, to taste again
The bilberry so blue :
High up the hills I mount again,
But only "find a few !"

(But this I find, to my surprise,
The hill I'd seen below,
That always seemed to *touch the skies*,
It does not touch them now !)

I hear the distant sound of bells,
In fancy as before,
When, as a boy, I roamed the hills
And all the valleys o'er.

The music still doth rise or fall,
As I climb high or low ;
The sounds they are not changed at all—
The bell is ringing now !

I meet the happy lovers yet
Upon the "Lovers' Walk,"
As once I did ; I see them sit ;
I hear their amorous talk.

I roam the woods as in the years
When we were "strangers yet,"
Dull Care and I, before the tears
My youthful cheeks had wet.

The dripping mosses by the well,
The rocks all overgrown
With woodbine sweet, I see them still,
Though thirty years have flown.

I see the feathery larches there,
With leaves of brilliant green,
That lately, in our poisoned air,
Are nowhere to be seen.

I see the beech upon whose boughs
I swung, a laughing child,
Full many a time ; and near the house
The garden—now run wild !

The church is peeping through the trees
As sweetly as of yore ;
The cuckoo's voice upon the breeze
Comes floating as before.

The purple ling is blooming there,
Upon the heathery height;
The hills they make a picture rare,
Beneath the mellow light.

I see the golden hypnum yet
Below the dripping crag;
And many a precious plant I get,
And put into my bag.

I see the lovely "winter-green," *
When all the woods are bare,
And there is little to be seen,
Save ferns and mosses there—

The ferns that shelter in the shelves
And crannies of the rocks,
And meekly strive to save themselves
From hoary Winter's shocks—

The mosses, hiding from the sun,
Where water's dripping ever,
In twenty moorland cloughs that run
Toward the Calder river.

I see the sweet, wild-ivy climb
Around the boulder stone—
O'er walls and trees—'mid Winter's rime,
I see them overgrown.

* In localities where the plant is now almost, if not quite, eradicated.

And Summer, Winter, Autumn, now
They blend themselves together ;
The blooming Spring doth come and go,
With every kind of weather.

In *Fancy* still I roam the groves
Where I have roamed of yore ;
Nor have I lost my ancient "loves ;"
I hold them as before !

Of what the heart doth once *possess*
Can it be robbed at all ?
The *form* may pass, but yet, I wis,
The *spirit* never shall !





Lines on Revisiting Holme and Hurstwood (Lancashire).

After many years' absence.

”**T** WAS when the summer and the autumn
meet ;
What time the ash shows greenest in the
woods,
But ere a leaf hath fallen—mellow time !

Leaving the murky city, where that stream
Ycleped the Irwell rolls his turbid wave,
And thousand chimneys belch into the sky
Their clouds of smoke, and darken all the land,
With eager steps we sought Holme's pleasant shades—
Sequestered Holme ! whose modest House of Prayer,
So softly nestling underneath the hill,
“Peeps” amid trees, with verdant ivy clad.
Sweet, rural Holme ! where meadows ever green,
And hanging woods, and sylvan walks abound,
(Meet trysting-place for amorous youth and maid)
Where silence is unbroken, save by sound
Of tumbling waterfall, or the rare scream
Of iron horse, dragging the ponderous cars.

Chide not, O Friend ! if I would linger here ;
For sure no fairer nook was ever found,
Nor more delightful, in a Land of Smoke !
Times beyond number have I, panting, come
Hither, to drink the freshness of the scene—
To roam the upland-pastures, or dive deep
Into these woods, where thousand lovely ferns
Do riot, and where mosses rich afford
A verdant couch, to tempt a sybarite !
On many a summer night, too, have I come,
And autumn,—ay, and winter, when the moon,
Uprising full, would bathe with her soft light
Both hill and valley, changing commonest ground,
By transformation swift and magical,
Into a scene of absolute loveliness !

Then marvel not if I would linger here ;
The time is eloquent ! These silent woods,
With tints of early autumn, here and there,
(And distant sounds of water falling soft)
So sweetly sad, are suited to my mood.

But westering suns give warning ; and we mount
With quickened steps the hill, whence presently
We look on Hurstwood and its ancient hall,
Endeared to us by memories passing sweet ;
And some with sadness mingled, for the Souls
We knew and loved, who there abode in peace,
And ever with kind greetings met us here,
When on this way, shall greet us nevermore !
Yet oh (thank Heaven !) how hard to realize
Is Death ! Our friends meet us in health,—depart ;

We never meet again : revisiting the scene
Of parting, how difficult 'tis to feel
That they are *not* ! how hard to realize !
Leave us, Philosophy, these gleams of hope,
These subtle intimations of a life
To be—these glimmerings faint of Essences
Beyond thy skill to fathom or to probe !
Right good is knowledge ; but the Wise do know
That knowledge leads to—deeper mystery !
Dead hands and cold may clutch at this fond heart,
But yonder's pleasant Hurstwood smiling still !

Thither descending, in hot haste, full soon
We gain the threshold of that cottage famed—
Sacred to many—where the Poet sweet
Of "gentle Una and her milk-white lamb"
Erewhile abode,* and sang the "exceeding" charms
Of her he loved—the "widow's daughter" proud,
Of yonder glen ; but vainly, for the maiden gave
No ear unto his wooing—cruel maid !
Ah, gentle Poet, Love was ever blind ;
But, hit or miss, the wicked Urchin still
His arrows plies with unrelenting hand ;
And wise or foolish, we must feel the smart.

But now we cannot linger. Time doth speed.
Full swiftly fly the hours when Pleasure leads.
Behold ! the shadows lengthen ; we must on
To Shedden, ere they deepen into night.

* Spenser. The cottage is near the hall, at Hurstwood.

SHEDDEN CLOUGH.

Full many a chequered year hath sped, O Stream !
Since thy familiar voice in music broke
Upon mine ear. How many a voice beloved
Since then hath ceased its music, silent now
In death ! But thou discourest sweetly still,
O Shedden stream ! murmuring o'er mimic "fall,"
By ferny brake, and over moss-clad stone
So eloquently, that I could listen here
For ever—heedless of season or of time !

Leaving the bustle and the tumult loud
Of the great city far behind, I turn
Gladly, once more, O favoured Stream, to thee ;
And on thy waters, as the crystal clear,
Still fondly gaze ; while visions of the Past
To Memory's eye come crowding : friends long dead
For me live still—I see the form ; I hear
The voice familiar ; yet the voice I hear
Is thine, O Stream, thine only !

There have passed
Twice fifteen years—years full of change—since I
First trod these verdant banks, an innocent boy,
And gambolled mid the fern-brakes, and the stones
And boulders rude, with green moss overgrown,
Casting a fearful eye upon the pools
Less shallow, where the umbrage dense of trees
O'erhanging made a darkness ; fearful, too,
Of water-breaks that now do "faëry" show—
Twice fifteen years have passed, and yet it seems
As yesterday—Time is but relative !

And Time *hath* dealt here softly ! There's no change,
 Or little : where the rowan tree o'erhung
 The limpid pool, with clustering berries filled
 Of brightest scarlet, there it hangeth still—
 A sight to tempt the rustic, wandering by.
 And yonder mossy stone, on which I wont
 In other years to sit, and muse for hours,
 "The privileged inmate of the solitude,"
 Harkening the music of the murmuring stream,
 And holding converse sweet with Nature mild,
 As with a mistress between whom and me
 Intruders might not dare—yon boulder-stone,
 'Gainst which the mountain-stream for ever breaks,
 Fretting itself, and frothing, all a-foam,
 Hath budged not yet, nor hardly hath it changed—
 'Tis but a little mossier than before !
 These ferns, that clothe with beauty banks else bare,
 Possessing each its own peculiar nook :
 Male-ferns and lady-ferns, of each a grove ;
 Of the sweet mountain-fern another still ;
 And hard-ferns from out crannies, here and there
 Peeping so brightly, clad in brightest green,
 And ever lovely ;—all these have I known
 Time out of mind, and each in its own place.
 And this bright mountain-torrent that careers
 So wild and free, as though it did rejoice
 In its own freedom, where these rocks oppose,
 Doth lift its voice in such familiar wise
 I seem to hear a Friend of other years,—
 I seem to hear the voice of One I loved,
 Who also knew *thee* well, O Shedden stream !

For thou wert dear to him beyond all words ;
Nor grew upon thy banks one fern or moss
To him unknown, nor plant of any kind.
And when with him I last did wander here,
I heard his dear voice mingle with thine own,
As now I seemed to hear it ; but the voice I heard
Was thine, O stream ! thine only, as I know,
Since *his* dear voice is silent evermore !

O Nature ! through all years thy lover, I ;
Thee have I followed still ; upon thy breast
Have lain secure, when the rude, pelting storm
Did rage without ! Thy sweet society
To me is all-sufficing. I have friends,
Faithful and kind, dear to my heart, and true
As ever Earth did bear ; but even *they* to me
Are less than thou, O mistress of my heart !
Beneficent Nature ! Bearer of the Balm !
And Sovereign Healer of all earthly wounds !

Flow on, O Shedden stream ! amid the ferns,
O'er mossy stones, and under leafy boughs
Of oak and ash, and the bright rowan-tree,
Flow on ; and, where the tumbled rocks oppose,
Break thou in music ! for, to me, thy voice
Is potent to unlock the fount of tears,
And pent-up feeling, and all tenderness
Saved in the heart amid life's bitter war—
'Mid strifes, and spites, and conflicts—what remains
Of good and pure, 'tis thine to call up still.

'Tis thine to quell resentment in my heart,
And soften in me yet what else were hard ;
For gentle Voices of the Past do chide
If, vexed with human littleness, I chafe.
And if my soul, groaning beneath the weight
Of the eternal mystery, in anguish cry :
“ Whence came I, whither go I, say, O God ? ”
A Voice, right soothing, softly whispers, “ Wait !
Aspire to nobleness ; serve Truth and Love ;
And unto thee, thus serving, Heaven shall come ! ”





Poor or Wealthy,—Which?

[A HISTORY *in nuce.*]

I LOVED a Maiden, beautiful and rich,
And was beloved ; her heart was all my own ;
For quite unwarped by Fashion she had grown
In native sweetness ; oft together thrown,
Our love grew daily stronger : I was rich—

Was rich, but rich in having her alone ;
I had a “mine,” though not of Cornish tin,
Nor of Peruvian ore ; the mine was all *within*,—
Its “market value” nothing : I must win
Some “filthy lucre,” or must live alone.

So spake her father—somewhat of a boor—
A churlish soul that loved the “Golden Calf,”
Whose ledger was his Bible. A full half
Of his long life he’d spent in Mammon’s cave—
That is to say, some thirty years and more.

The fiat had been issued : I must go—
Must seek the favour of Dame Fortune, shy,
Wayward, capricious, fickle. Tell me why
She is so, can you? “No, I can’t.” Nor I ;
Only, I think no other dame is so—

So very, very hard to deal with—no !
“ And did you find her quite *so* hard ?” I did ;
Nor could I win her on these shores, but sped
Across the western ocean, where I bid
Again, and won : my wealth began to grow.

Her father, in the meantime, had been told
I'd failed once more—was bankrupt yet again.
“ Ah, if that's so,” the old man said, “ 'tis plain
She's not for him. I'll see if I can gain
My girl's consent to wed a man with gold.”

He stopped the food on which our love had grown
Still stronger, lustier than before ! We grieved
And pined to have no letters. I received
No more ; nor Ellen. Each had each deceived,
So each one thought. Can *he*, can *she* have grown

Indifferent, then ? Alas, it must be so !
And thus sped on the years—four years and more.
Fortune, the while, upon a foreign shore,
Was smiling on me more and ever more,
Though poorer, daily, I did ever grow !

“ Ah,” says the Reader, “ how can that be so ?”
Poorer at *heart*, if I may speak more plain.
Mine anguish grew ; nor could they ease the pain ;
'Twas One could do it. I *must* see again
Old England, and old “ loves.” Yes, I will know

If she is faithful—if alive at all.
So “ selling out,” in haste, straightway I sped

Across the seas to England. She had wed
Another—"could not see me"—but she *did* ;
And in one little word had told me all !

Full poor in purse I've been, but now I'm rich :
Full rich in heart I've been, but now I'm poor :
To gain my wealth, I sought a foreign shore :
Fortune, for me, *whilst opening, shut the door !*
Say, Reader, am I poor or wealthy,—which ?





The Dead Bride.

MAIDENS, robed in white, they bear her
To the grave that open lies ;
Never saw this earth a fairer—
One more fit for paradise !

Toward the yew that standeth lonely,
Where you hear the moaning tide,
Soft they bear her, who but only
Yesterday became a bride !

Bride she was, but never married,
Since, ere yet the sun went down,
O'er the threshold she was carried
Lifeless, in her bridal gown !

Eager in the hall he waited—
Horses prancing at the door—
Calls to her : "We are belated."
Who will never answer more !

Never ? yea, from heaven, truly,
If there be a heaven, I know
She hath sent him answer duly
Who on earth had loved her so !

When the dreadful news was told him,
Quick he rushes to her side ;
And 'twas piteous to behold him,
As he kissed his pallid bride !

Even *then* his heart was broken,
And his mind too ; it is stated :
“ Since that hour no word he's spoken,
Save but this : ‘ We are belated ! ’ ”

By the sombre yew She sleepeth,
On her grave white lilies grow,
Round the stone the ivy creepeth,
Sadly moans the wave below !

By the grave He wanders often—
Late and early, it is stated ;
And the coldest heart would soften,
When he cries : “ We are belated ! ”





White flowers.

[IN MEMORIAM. W. J. A.]

HERE, in my garden, even where I stand,
Stood he, one month gone ; 'twas a
summer-day—
One of the loveliest, and the flowery land
Did seem to laugh beneath the sunny ray.

And troops of faëry children danced about
My garden-borders, bearing each the prize
I long had promised, with a jubilant shout ;
Whereat the moisture gathered in his eyes !

For he remembered a sweet, tiny flower,
The “little *Florence*,” darling of his heart,
Quick-snatched away in most untimely hour ;
And turned aside to shed his tears apart !—

The “little *Florence*,” whose spirit bright and free,
Swiftly exhaled from its fair-lily stem,
Had passed into the Land of Mystery,
Too soon for us, but haply not for Him !

I gave him flowers, as white as driven snow,
That he might strew them on the little grave ;
But *where he laid them he is sleeping now*,
Though scarcely withered are the flowers I gave !

He thanked me in these "Verses," lying here,
The ink scarce dry, although the hand be cold ;
For he had seen me shed a tender tear,
And found me of his own peculiar mould.

Nay, he had seen me kiss, with passionate love,
Those little angel-beggars of my flowers,
And thinking of *his* angel sweet, above :
" Your gifts to *these*," he said, " are gifts to *ours* ! "

Who had not melted ? no unmanly tears
Were those that started as he slowly passed
From out my gate ; perhaps, *then*, had he strange fears
That tender parting was to be our last !

But how ? I know not, save by prophecy :
Haply his *Florence* held out beckoning hands ?
We cannot tell ; much, here, is " mystery,"
And things befall that no one understands !

Struck by the fell disease whose victims go
All unadmonished to the silent tomb,
He suddenly died ! and where he lieth low
To strew these " flowers," *In memory*, am I come !



What a Poet is.

*"For deathless powers to verse belong,
And they like demigods are strong
On whom the Muses smile!"*

—WORDSWORTH.



POET, sir ; indeed ! and what is *he* ?"
As the man spake he smiled right scornfully,
Whereat I ventured this, in quick reply :

A "Poet" is the highest Being upon earth—
Of his own time the very noblest birth ;
Though dead, he speaks, and to each age belongs,
While every clime doth echo with his songs.
Kings far above, and kingdoms, he survives
The crash of empires, and for ever lives—
The mighty Master of the Human Heart ;
Nor may man's power e'er go beyond the Poet's art !
Nations contest the honour of his birth,
Which in itself must prove the Poet's worth.

Thou put'st to me the question scornfully :
"A Poet, sir ; indeed ! and what is *he* ?"
As though a poet a poor fool must be ;
I'd have thee know the title is so high
That e'en to bear it some would gladly die !

The Poet's empire it is wider far
Than all Earth's kingdoms put together are !
Nor canst thou name one monarch of the past,
Or of the present, that hath him surpassed :
'Th' Italian Dantè, and our Milton bold,
Sweet Shakespeare, Virgil, and Greek Homer, old,
Show me one *Royal* or *Imperial* name
That e'er shall equal these bright Souls in fame !
Then pass with reverence where great poets lie,
Nor question me again so scornfully !





Snatched Away.

[WRITTEN IN MEMORY OF A LITTLE MAIDEN OF
SURPASSING LOVELINESS, WHO WAS SUDDENLY
SNATCHED AWAY BY FEVER.]



PASS by the church where the ivy clings,
And on by the village-school ;
And there, as of yore, loud laughter rings ;
But *the wind o'er the graves blows cool !*

I pass by the school where the ivy climbs ;
The scholars are at their play,
And as merry they seem as at other times
When I have passed that way.

But I think of one who is *not there*,
And who nevermore will be—
Of a youthful maid, so passing fair,
I never again shall see !

O sweet, dark eyes, that nevermore
Shall sparkle in laughter and glee !
O sweet, dark eyes, that nevermore
Shall fix their gaze on me !

O ringlets, black as the raven's wing,
And cheeks of the peach's bloom !
O heaven ! but 'tis a pitiful thing
All this should pass to the tomb—

Should pass through the greedy jaws of death,
And silently moulder away—
As sweet a spirit as ever drew breath,
Or ever was clad in clay !





Town and Country.

O Rus ! quando ego te aspiciam ?

—HOR.



—— loves the Town, and singeth in its
praise ;—

I love the Country, and the country ways ;
And in the country still would spend my days.

C —— loves the Town, its tumult and its noise ;—
I love the Country, and the country joys,
And always envy country girls and boys.

C —— loves the theatre, and often would there go ;—
I love to see the first pale primrose blow,
In early Spring ; would it were blooming now !

C —— loves the streets, where brilliant lights are
burning ;—

I like the woods, and love to go a-ferning,
And meet with something new at every turning.

E'en now, with fond desire my bosom burns
To roam once more, *knee-deep*, amid the ferns,
In woodland dells ; and soon as winter turns

To lovely spring, shall I fern-hunting go ;
For many a clough and sheltered nook I know
Where hard-fern, male, and buckler-fern do grow.

To many a pretty valley shall I bring
The friends I love, when we are on the wing,
Where they shall breathe the very breath of spring !—
Where they shall hear the wild-birds carolling ;
Where they shall hear the rivulets murmuring ;
Where they shall see a thousand ferns that fling
Their graceful frondage, green, and full, and free :
All pleasant sights, and sounds, and scents shall see,
And hear, and feel, the friends that follow me !

C—— loves the concert-room, and the singing in it ;—
I love the choir of thrush, and lark, and linnet :
Oh, the first Spring Concert ! when will they begin it ?
When budding groves resound to voice of thrush,
And the sweet lady-fern begins to push,
I for the Country mean to make a rush.

C—— loves the city and the city belles ;—
I love a village where a Maiden dwells,
Deep in the country, where are mossy wells—
Deep in the country, where are ferny dells,
And hanging woods, the lovely maiden dwells
That I love best ; her virgin bosom swells
With all pure, healthy feelings ; and I know
She's sweeter than the sweetest flowers that blow :
She, and the Country, are my heaven below !



The Hills of "Bonnie" Scotland.

Once more among the old, gigantic hills,
With vapours clouded o'er ;—
They beckon me—the giants—from afar,
They wing my footsteps on—
Ehlenschlager.

Do—doth love a country that doth level lie ;
But I love a country rising mountain-high,
And upon *all* mountains cast a longing eye.

Lovely is the region of our English lakes ;
Speak of " Highland Mountains," all the soul awakes ;
'Tis a flight my fancy very often takes.

If I think of Scotland, 'tis a hanging wood,
Or a lofty mountain, or a roaring flood :
Oh, thou " bonnie " Scotland, thou art *in my blood* !

Though I am not of thee, yet I love thee more
Than all other countries I have travelled o'er ;
And my love increaseth ever more and more.

Oft among thy mountains have I roamed at will :
Oh, the glorious prospect from the lofty hills !
Oh, the inspiration that the spirit fills !

There among the Titans, cold and bare and grey—
Bare and yet beautiful—beautiful are they !
There among the Titans, all the summer day—

Bare and yet beautiful ! for an Artist bold
Worketh on those mountains, all so bare and cold,
Whose name I needn't tell, for it was known of old.

Fifty streams are falling, each as silver white—
Falling down the mountains with a voice of might,
Broken by the distance : 'tis a lovely sight !

Now the sky o'er-shrouded, gloometh all the scene,
Changeth shine to shadow ; where the light hath been
All is now in darkness : fearful is the scene !

Suddenly a tempest gathers wild and high,
And the roaring thunder shaketh all the sky ;
By the dreaded lightning blinded is the eye.

How the fearful echoes thro' the mountains throng !
O'er the summits scudding, the storm-cloud drives
along ;—

Still I love the mountains, *in storm*, however strong !

When they are not lovely, they are wild and grand ;
Sudden change comes o'er them : as by magic wand
Of a great magician, changèd is the land.

If I think of Scotland, 'tis a hanging wood,
Or a lofty mountain, or a roaring flood ;
Oh, thou "bonnie" Scotland, thou art in my blood !

Is it that the Echoes of Great Voices ring
Through thy hills and valleys ? Is it that they fling
A glamour all about thee ; is it *their* colouring ?

If I know my spirit, 'tis not so at all ;
'Tis thy purple mountains that my soul enthrall—
'Tis thy lofty mountains that my spirit call !

There are higher mountains, wilder far, and grand,—
Grander far, and vast, in many another land ;
But most I love the hills of " bonnie " Scotland !

Loftier hills and vaster oft the spirit fill,
With a deeper sadness than the tongue can tell ;
Scarcely are they conquered by the human will.

And our human smallness, on those mountains old,
Oft the soul oppresses, while the blood runs cold ;—
By the lofty mountains our *littleness* is told !

If those mighty giants sink beneath the wave,
If those towering Titans find a watery grave,
Oh, the feeble footing Humanity must have !





Love and Spring.

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF HOFFMANN VON
FALLERSLEBEN.]

WHILE Love slept in a rosebush, came
The Spring, and called aloud her name.
Love heard the call, but never spoke—
Peeped out, and into laughter broke ;
Yet would not leave her rosy bed—
Fell fast asleep again, instead !

But still, as every morning broke,
The fond Spring kissed her till she woke ;
He came caressing every day,
Till her rich heart all open lay,
And his hot, yearning soul did find
The healing power of Love so kind !



Lines Written on the Round Tower of Windsor Castle.*

THE time of falling leaves was stealing on,
So sweetly sad, when Earth begins to don
Her autumn mantle of a sober brown ;
But still the bright Earth wore her summer gown—
Verdant the meads, the gardens gay with flowers—
When, gazing forth from Windsor's royal towers,
I saw and *felt* the beauty of our land !
Beneath me, spread as by enchanter's wand,
Lay towns and towers, hills, vales, and woods, and
streams,
(No lovelier vision have I seen in dreams.)
Far as you gazed, winding his sinuous way,
Flowed silver Thames ; while over all there lay
A calm, so sweet, so beautiful ! I stood
Transfixed and mute ; there thrilled through all my
blood
A pulse of feeling, which in vain I seek
Here to give forth in words—all words are weak !
O England ! oh, my country ! then I said,

* Looking from the extreme heights of this tower, upon a clear day, the panorama spread out before you embraces portions of as many as *twelve* counties, viz., Berks., Oxfordshire, Bucks., Beds., Herts., Middlesex, Essex, Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hants, and Wilts. It is one of the most extensive, and also one of the loveliest, "views" in England.

Cold were *his* heart and poor—his soul were dead
Who, looking forth upon that picture there—
Hills, meadows, groves, and streams, so wondrous fair,
Could gaze unmoved ! I joy to breathe thy air,
Thou country of my heart ! my highland home,
To which at last I turn, where'er I roam !
Thou "precious stone set in the silver sea !"
(Vainly I seek meet words to speak of thee.)
Thou land of Shakespeare and of Milton old !
Thou land of Liberty—home of the Bold
And Free ! thou England, whose steep, rocky shore
Beats back the "envious" surge for evermore !—
Whose stately ships are whitening every sea—
Whose empire is the empire of the Free—
Whose proud and honoured standard is unfurled
In every corner of this mighty world !
I love thee and thy People ; and I vow
To love thee ever, as I love thee now !
What my weak worth avails, while here below,
I give to thee : my heart, my all, is thine ;
Whilst I, in turn, can call this England *mine* !



Lines on visiting the Churchyard of Stoke Pogis.

*(The scene of Gray's "Elegy," and where the Poet lies
buried.)*

UPON the stately brow we late had stood
Of royal Windsor, from whose highest
towers

You look upon a scene too passing fair
For any pencil to describe its charms ;
Much less could words so weak and poor as mine
Do justice to the picture. Thence we passed
By that famed Eton—England's greatest "School"—
Where Wellington once "urged the flying ball,"
Trundled his hoop, or clove the glassy wave
Of neighbouring Thames, or sought the linnet's nest,
And seized remorseless on her chirping brood ! *

O'er dusty roads we passed for many a mile ;
When all at once there loomed a distant spire—
A thin, tall column topped the neighbouring trees,
Towards which, right eagerly, we bent our steps ;
Passing through lanes thick-strewn with blackberries
That in the autumn sun had ripened fast.

* It is well known that our great military hero, Wellington, when at school, was much fonder of his *games* than his tasks.

Oh, how I love these dear, old English lanes,
Where the bright cinquefoil most of all you see ;
Or spreading bramble, with its rose-like leaves !
A thousand times more beautiful to me
Is Nature's Garden than the trimmest bowers,
And beds, and landscapes, formed by highest skill !
Times beyond number have I, when a child,
Stopped to admire the "Loosestrife of the Groves," *
A simple flower, that few would seek, but yet
Its hue of lovely yellow, and its leaves
Of soft, harmonious green, do make for me
A picture upon which I cannot even now
Gaze without feeling throughout all my frame
A thrill of purest pleasure and delight !
And I have gazed at least a thousand times
At one sweet woodbine (flowerless quite) that crept
Over a rock above my childhood's home,
And gazed in silent rapture. Nature there,
Sweetly harmonious, struck my childish sense
With speechless admiration. Nature gives
To all, attentive, with a bounteous hand,
Stamps on the plastic mind her beauteous forms,
And fills the memory with all lovely things !

'Twas almost evening ; through a stile we passed
That from the lane led to the village church,
Which there distinct before us stood revealed—
That far-famed Church, with "ivy-mantled tower,"
Familiar now to every English child.

* *Lysimachia nemorum*, the Little Sylvan Loosestrife.

Oh, how the poet hallows every scene !
 What magic doth he work ! The meanest things,
 And poorest, placed in his alembic, turn
 To gold, transmuted by that alchemy
 Of which *he* is the master—he alone !

How lovely was the landscape ! and how sweet,
 Embosomed in its trees, its tower all clad
 With verdant ivy, stood that ancient church !
 Small need of poet's pencil to enrich
 With magic colouring, and the thousand hues
 Of poet's fancy, yon time-honoured pile *
 That stands so calm, so beautiful—a scene
 To stir, if but for once, the dullest soul
 To thoughts beyond his wont ; and quite beyond
 The farthest reach of his weak mind to span !
 These country churches have I always loved :
 Their moss-grown walls, and “ ivy-mantled towers,”
 And mouldering graves, and immemorial yews ;
 The “ solemn stillness ” there that ever reigns,—
 All this, to me, is precious, and more dear
 Than words can tell. 'Tis sad, yet soothing sweet,
 Unto a soul that would for ever brood
 Upon the sacred, silent, hoary Past.

“ Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
 “ Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,”
 In silent thought, o'er silent graves we trod.
 A hundred grassy mounds without a name,
 Or e'en the faintest record whom or whence,
 We passed on either hand—a touching sight !

* The church is of great antiquity.

Nor could we gaze without a secret sigh
On these frail barriers 'gainst oblivion,
Whilst muttering low the well-remembered lines :
" Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
" Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;
" Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
" Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre."

And here and there were graves besprent with flowers
That in the sun had withered—nameless mounds,
But not forgotten ! Loving, tender hearts
Again will come, and deck with freshest flowers
These nameless graves, and haply drop a tear
Of silent grief, whilst strewing roses there,
Or the sweet violet in the early spring.

Oh, let us not forget the silent Dead !
For soon shall *we* be silent too, and sleep
Under a stone within the churchyard bounds.
Some weeks, or months, or years may intervene,
Or but a day ! For thee to-morrow's sun
May shine in vain ! E'en now, from yonder church
The solemn death-bell strikes upon the ear !
" Slow through the churchway path I see *him* borne "
Who lately trod the earth in manly pride,
A goodly Form—now lies he low, indeed !

Oh, ye gay worldlings ! would the pageant there,
So solemn and so sad, could touch your minds,
And penetrate your hearts, all crusted o'er,
And hardened long, by worldly intercourse !

Ye live as if immortal, yet each day
Your number lessens, and each hour the bell
Tolls for a soul departed—unprepared.

Low in the western sky the sun had sunk ;
And now he stands majestic on the hill,
Clothed in robes of splendour, such as he
But rarely dons in these sad, northern climes.
No funeral pageant *there* / the " King of Day,"
Trailing bright clouds of glorious hue, descends
Unto his couch, and leaves the paler moon
To light with her faint beams this nether world.

" Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
" And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
" Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
" And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds ;"

" Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
" The moping owl does to the moon complain
" Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
" Molest her ancient, solitary reign."

" Now comes still evening on ;" but let us pass
Once more, O Friend, the *lichen-covered stone*,
Where " rests *his* head upon the lap of Earth "
Whose sacred pen hath writ those tender lines.

Brooding in silence there, we stood for long,
(By night and " lonely contemplation led ;")
We thought upon the busy world without—
Upon the vast and surging crowd that fills

The streets of mighty London—thought how few
Of all the many there had felt at heart
The poet's teaching. Oh, ye busy Throng,
Who worship Mammon at a thousand marts ;
And ye who worship honour, place, and power,
And name, and fame, and idolize success !
Deep on your hearts would I impress these words :
“ The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
“ And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
“ Await alike th' inevitable hour :
“ The paths of glory lead but to the grave ! ”





Consolations of the Blind.*

MINE eyes are dark, and yet I am not blind !
I murmur not, dear Friend, as one forsaken ;—
I still am rich, and think that Heaven is kind ;
For oft within my soul there doth awaken

A glorious spring ! Cold winter comes not near !
May blooms for ever ! over the blue sky
No single cloud doth flit, for all is clear—
Lapped in the sunshine doth the landscape lie !

With me, dear Friend, the flowers are always bright ;
Heaven's glorious stars, for me, for ever shine !
For me, thy friendly face hath still its light ;
Still blooms the rose upon those cheeks of thine !

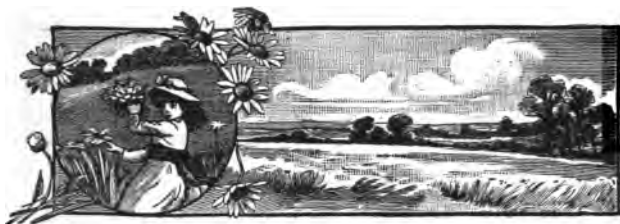
If Time, corroding Time, that gnaweth ever,
Hath furrowed o'er thy front—I do not see ;
If thy dark locks are silvery now, yet never
Shall they seem other than *dark* locks to me !

* See "Der Blinde" of Emma von Nindorf.

No looks of coldness or of jealousy,
No glances haughty, breathing of disdain,
Shall meet *my* glance, my tender soul to try,
Or wring this gentle heart with bitter pain !

Thus have I still great cause for thankfulness,
Dear Friend, nor need I greatly to repine,
Since in *my* world methinks the cares are less,
And lighter far, than in that world of thine.





To Annie.

(AN INVALID.)

O H, Annie ! the sweet Spring's coming again—
The season of sunshine and flowers ;
A soft breath 'll blow over mountain and
plain,
And over this valley of ours ;

And under its power every bud 'll awake,
And the woods 'll be green again ;
The sweet birds will warble in every brake,
And in every country-lane.

Nay, though it is March, and the land's all white,
And icicles hang in the gloom,
I hear the first lark, who sings at his height,
As if Spring already had come !

Nay, though it is March, I've heard a sweet thrush,
And he sang with a voice of power ;
Perched high on the top of a neighbouring bush,
I have heard him for many an hour !

Nay, though it is March, and a cold wind blows,
In my garden is many a flower ;
The daffodil bright, and the "rathe" primrose,
Cannot wait for an April shower.

And the white cinquefoil, in the wild hedge-row,
I must seek for its star-like blooms ;
For there it is found whatever winds blow,
Nor waits till the Spring-time comes.

But the joy-time *is* coming, O Annie ! again ;
The birds and the flowers they tell ;
The buds of the "may"* are bursting amain,
While the buds of the lilac swell.

Yea, soon shall the glorious Spring be here,
And the Winter have passed away ;
And I would, for the sake of my Annie dear,
That the month were already May !

But time speedeth on ; and I wot full soon
That the *beauteous* May shall come,
And the *rose-month* follow : in leafy June,
It is pleasant in woods to roam !

'Tis pleasant, in the time when roses blow,
In the cloudiest land to dwell ;
And pleasant it is in sweet June to go,
And to wander in ferny dell !

* Hawthorn.

Be mindful, O maiden ! and from thy cheek
Pray pluck out the wan *white* rose ;
And plant there a *red* one, my Annie meek,
Ere the season of maidenhood goes !

For Youth of our life is the beautiful Spring,
And a beautiful time indeed ;
And the Poet is always minded to sing,
Though none should his verses read !





The Nosegay.

(AFTER UHLAND.)

IF trees, and shrubs, and flowers a meaning have,
If in the red rose one doth see Love's flame,
And sweet forget-me-not be Friendship's name,
If Honour hath bays, and cypress haunt the grave ;
If, when no other index there is seen,
The subtle meaning in the *colour* lie :
If yellow stands for Pride and Jealousy,
And sweet Hope nestles in the tender green ;
Then will I go, and from my garden beds
Pluck all bright flowers—blues, yellows, whites, and
reds,
That in *thy* nosegay they may all be bound.
Here is my joy, my pain, Hope's treasury,
My love, my faith, my fame, my jealousy ;
In thee my *life*, in thee my *death* is found !





An Invitation.

O H, Annie! the Spring hath come and hath
gone,
And you never have been to see
Where the lilac sweet in the hedge doth
bloom,
And blossoms the apple tree—

Where the oak and the ash together grow,
And the tall trees flourish still
In the pleasant wood—the river below,
And a church upon the hill!

And the lilac hath *wasted* its sweetness quite,
Since *you* never have passed this way;
And the lily, that blooms so wan and white,
Will wither and die away

Ere Annie shall see it, unless she haste;
Then hasten, Annie, I pray!
Oh, come! ere the beautiful time hath passed—
Ere Pleasure hath passed away!

Oh, come! ere the hawthorn hath shed its blooms—
The beautiful hawthorn sweet!
Oh, come! while the heavenly lily's perfumes
The delicate senses greet!

Oh, come ! while the throstle still loudly sings,
And his sweet voice ringeth clear ;
Oh, come ! while boon Nature around us flings
Her beauty—both far and near !

Oh, come ! while the air is filled with the breath
Of a thousand lovely flowers,
And golden laburnums are bending beneath
The weight of their golden dowers ;—

While snowballs white in the shrubberies gleam,
And the gaythorn red doth glow,
And earth for the time a heaven doth seem ;
Come hither, dear Annie, *now* !





When Roses are Passing Away.

RIPE Midsummer-time, O Annie ! has come,
And you haven't *yet* passed this way ;
Though the white wild-rose is shedding its
bloom,
And the red one's dying away !

And the flowers that late in my garden did bloom,
The lilies and pinks, so gay,
That filled the wide air with richest perfume,
Have too stealthily passed away !

One deep-hued rose in my border but blows
Where thousands blossomed before ;
And I pluck, as I pass, the crimson rose,
Where late I gathered a score !

Right sweet are lilies, both orange and white,
And the pinks and pansies, too ;
But, of all dear flowers that give us delight,
The crown to the rose is due !

And sad is the time—my sorrow is deep,
When roses are passing away ;
Nay, sad am I now, almost I could weep,
As I pluck “ the last rose ” of *to-day* !

In sadness I walk o’er the meadows you know,
That lie on the slope of the hill,
And think of a time *you* never *could* know,
Nor language *my* feelings could tell !

For, wandering thus, over meadows new-mown,
And rich with the scent of the hay,
My thoughts travel back to fields I have known,
As sweet as these meadows to-day.

Dear time ! when Life’s field lay fallow as yet,
And the joy-cup was brimming o’er.
Those fragrant meadows how can I forget !—
Their *scent*—I shall feel it no more !

A white moon is rising above the high wood,
Those meadows are bathed in its sheen ;
No change shall you see ; all things they have
stood ;
They’re now as they ever have been !

Unless that yon trees are a little more “ grown,”
The shadows a little more deep,
(Ah, deeper, I wis, than the “ shadows ” I’d known
When I went in those meadows to reap !)

And *here* the moon's rising above a high wood,
 These meadows are bathed in its sheen,
The scent of *this* hay goes into my blood :—
 For a moment I am what I've been !

But quickly it passeth, O Annie, dear !—
 Too quickly it passeth away,
As passeth the moon yonder cloud so near
 It darkeneth her silvery ray !

Full soon she is hid, and a gloomy sky
 Betokeneth a night of rain ;
And I must away, dear Annie : Good bye,
 Till I meet you at Kersal again !





Amor Redivivus.

AIR made sweeter by her breath
Have I breathed again, to-day ;
Though to breathe it be my death,
Still I cannot keep away !

Songs I heard her sing, once more ;
Thrilled my heart her every tone :
Ah, so like that voice of yore !—
Scarcely I repressed a groan.

Though the years have rolled away,
Stands she here in all but name :
Love, why dost thou vex me, say,
When I cannot be the same !

Cruel Love, to come so late !
Envious Time thou art to blame :—
When the birds in winter mate,
I may hope to do the same !



A Summer-call to the Mountains.

AWAY to the mountains away !
Whose summits are gleaming afar.
O why should we linger to-day,
When the uplands are shining so fair !
O why should we linger at home
When the earth is apparelled so gay !
It is sweet through the highlands to roam :
Away to the mountains, away !

Away to the mountains, away !
Where the torrent is breaking in foam,
And the bracken is kissing the spray,
And the wild-flower is blooming *alone*—
Where the laverock is soaring on high,
And is tuning a heavenly lay,
Till lost in the blue of the sky :
Away to the mountains, away !

Away to the mountains, away !
Where the red-deer delighteth to be,
And the hawk is hunting for prey,
And each wild thing is roaming so free—

Where the view stretches on to the sea,
And the peaks rise in endless array,
And each seems a Titan to be :
Away to the mountains, away !

Away to the mountains, away !
Where the holly-fern grows by the tarn,*
And the stone-break, with golden ray,
Shineth out by the mountain-burn ! * *—
Where the buckler-ferns dance in the wind
That is roaming the upland alway,
And seem it a pleasure to find :
Away to the mountains, away !

Away to the mountains, away !
Let us seek for our hearts' desire
Where the campion * * * covers the way,
And the mountain seemeth on fire !—
Where the speedwell's heavenly blue †
Gleameth out in the light of day,
Amid flowers of every hue :
Away to the mountains, away !

Away to the mountains, away !
Let us climb to the loftiest height,
Let us find out the spot, if we may,
Where the gentian is blooming so bright ‡—

* *Polystichum Lonchitis*.

** *Saxifraga aizoides*.

*** The Mossy Campion, *Silene acaulis*.

† *Veronica saxatilis*.

‡ *Gentiana nivalis*, now exceedingly rare, and which is threatened with extinction in Scotland, where alone it is met with in Britain.

The bloom that so dearly we prize,
The flower we have sought for alway,
With the colour of yonder skies :
Away to the mountains, away !


Away to the mountains, away !
Where the breeze is blowing so free,
And the spirit of man is so gay,
And he finds it a pleasure to be !
Though Care's at the foot of the hill,
He'll not overtake us to-day ;
For *once* he shall *not* have his will :
Away to the mountains, away !

Away to the mountains, away !
To linger below we would scorn,
Who've wrought through the heat of the day,
Who've wrought through the night until morn !
We have earned a release from toil,
And we'll now take a holiday ;
So here is an end to our toil :
Away to the mountains, away !





The Half-open Rose.*

F all the Roses in the hedge that blossom,
I know not one with so divine a breath
As thine, that show'st to me thy lovely bosom,
Half-hidden still within the verdant sheath.

The open rose the Zephyr comes and kisses,
Stealing her sweetness, like a wanton boy ;
But thou, too modest, shunn'st his wild caresses,
Saving thy heart's treasure for a purer joy.

Half-open Rose, the loveliest in the bower !
Thou mind'st me of a song divinely sweet,
A moment heard—a song whose magic power
Is bound to quicken yet the poor heart's beat !

Dear, budding Rose ! thou mind'st me of a maiden,
Whose love, though fervent, yet is never spoken ;
And none shall know her as a soul love-laden,
Save One alone, who sees the silent token.

In her moist eye, and in the lingering touch
Of her soft hand, in her hot, glowing kiss,
He feels the measure of her love—how much
Is meted to him of terrestrial bliss !

*See "Die Halb-offene Rose" of Adolf Stöber.



SONNETS.



*Alles, was der Dichter uns geben kann, ist seine
Individualität.—SCHILLER.*



Amor Redivivus.

FRE March arrive must roll another moon—
Another moon ere yet the snowdrop peeps ;
Still nestled in the earth fair Flora sleeps,
And far remote, indeed, is leafy June ;
And yet my heart is in a merry tune,
For love, late chilled, hath woke to life anew :
The Spring has come before the Spring was due—
My Spring has come, but is it late or soon ?
Are whitening locks, and the still deepening line
Graven by Care and Time, emblems of Spring ?
And though, like to a bird, this heart of mine
Carol its joyance in a festive lay,
Within the leafless woods a thrush will sing
As blithe a song, upon a winter day !

Spring Vearnings.

SPRING BELATED—OR SOMEBODY !



H me ! why doth fair Flora make delay ?
 Why is the land about so parched and dry ?
 Why doth the Spring approach so tardily,
 And pitiless Winter here prolong his stay—
 Pelting with hail and sleet, by night and day—
 With storms of snow, in place of blossom-showers ?
 Keen, biting winds, and bare and leafless bowers,
 Are *these* the adjuncts of the “jocund” May ?
 Why do the hawthorn-buds shrink back again,
 And the dear lilacs wither here, and die ?
 Why do the feathered choirs from song refrain ;
 And golden pile-worts bloom so charily
 Down in the meadow there, and by the lane ?—
 Oh, that the Spring would come—or Somebody !

II.

The days go by, and yet Spring cometh not ;
 And I am weary, “waiting for the May !”
 Scarcely a flower is seen upon the way,
 And very few within my garden-plot :
 I look in vain for one forget-me-not ;
 The jonquils and the daffodils are there,
 But wind-flowers, tulips, pansies, lilies fair
 And sweet of breath, I seek, but find them not !
 June is not far, and yet there is no Spring—
 No hawthorn bloom, nor any lilac-flowers ;
 And the dear thrush that wont, erewhile, to sing
 So gaily in the hollow, hath ta'en wing,
 To gladden with his glad voice other bowers :
 Oh, that fair Somebody would come—or Spring !

III.

Oh, that the may would blossom forth again ;
And purple pyramids of lilac-blooms,
With their rich-scented breath, might fill my rooms !
Oh, that each song-bird would renew his strain ;
And vernal airs blow over hill and plain,
That Flora sweet might clothe herself anew
With flower-sprays of every form and hue,
And joyously lead forth the jocund train !
Oh, that laburnums, blossoming once more,
Might hang their tassels of bright-flaming gold
Above the lilac-bush, by yonder door !
Oh, that the season of sweet youth and bloom,
When Earth makes haste her treasures to unfold,
The dear, delightful Spring—or Somebody, would come !

IV.


ARRIVAL OF THE BELATED.

The warm south wind comes laden with the rain—
The welcome wind we longed for many a day
Is here *at last*, and Eurus is away—
Nature awakes, and it is Spring again !
The pile-worts, in the meadow, and the lane,
That dared not open in the bitter cold
Of tardy May, are now a sheet of gold,
And I must cull them even in the rain.
Nature awakes, and it is Spring once more !
Green are the hedges, and the lilac-tree,
That the cold east wind withered at my door,
Hath taken comfort since mild Auster blew :
The woods around are full of melody ;
And I am full of the dear Spring and—*You* !

V.

The dear, dear Spring ! what freshness of the green !
 What melody of birds ! what hum of bees !
 What wealth of bloom ! what mildness of the breeze !
 What ferns and mosses in the woods are seen !
 I sit surrounded by a sylvan screen
 Of feathery frondage ; birches and the may,
 Thick-interwoven, hide me from the day,
 And over oak-roots, ivy-clad, I lean.
 Though Spring be late—so late, how speedily
 Hath Flora sweet put on apparel fair !
 How green the woods that but a day gone by
 Were bare as winter, and how gay the meads !—
 The cherry blooms, and blossometh the pear :
 Ah, if love bloometh when fair Somebody reads ?

A Blind Shot.

N poet's page, far back, when I would read :
 " Cupid is blind, and at haphazard fly
 His fatal arrows at the passers-by ! "

I hardly knew, in sooth, what I did read ;
 And later, when I knew, I took no heed ;
 But now being hit when even " in the sere,"
 And of all archers Cupid least might fear,
 I know that he is very blind, indeed !
 Had he but *seen*, one arrow had been spared ;
 And I had gone, unharmed, upon my way—
 Had scathless passed, for Cupid had not dared
 To make a target of a head that's *gray* ;
 But he is blind, and his too fatal dart,
 At random thrown, at length has pierced my heart !

Breezy Kersal.*

I.

THEY call thee "breezy Kersal," and I know
The winds hold high carousal on thy moors
The winter through, and shake our cottage-
doors,

While all the summer long the breezes blow.

But many a bosky covert lies below

Dear to the pilewort, and the primrose pale—

Dear to the windflower, nodding in the gale ;

And many a bank whereon the bluebells grow !

And many a river-holm where pee-wits cry,

And many a thicket whence the thrush sings clear,

And many a crystal-well that runs not dry

Even in the sultriest time of all the year,

And many a hedge-row, bramble-laced and high,

And many a nook to Contemplation dear !

II.

I love thee breezy Kersal ; I would go

From out the dingy city, and its grime—

Up to thy moorland's topmost height would climb,

And look upon the mighty town below,

When the ten thousand lights are all aglow !

There pause and breathe ; and while the freshening
wind,


Stirring the pulses, purge both body and mind,

Feel all my strength renewed, as I do now.

* Written in 1880.

I love thee breezy Kersal, in the time
Of summer sweet, when fragrance fills the air,
Or in the autumn, or mid winter's rime—
Through all the changing seasons I would share
Thy pure delights (and speak thy praise in rhyme)
And with thy calm my wearied spirit repair !

A Mountain Landscape.

 KNOW a Vale, far up among the hills,
In the high north, through which a river glides,
For ever fed by fifty gurgling rills,
That lace with silver threads the mountain sides ;
But roar in torrents when the storms are high.
There, in deep cloughs, the plummy ferns are growing,
And rocks grotesque are nodding to the sky,
While o'er the land the freshest winds are blowing.
I know a Cottage in that valley green,
Snug-nestling there beneath a hanging wood ;
And from that cot the towering hills are seen,
And oft you hear the tumbling of the flood,
In winter storms, when every mountain-ghyll
Raiseth his voice, and roareth with a will.



By the Brun : After many Years.

STREAM of the Brun—Child of the heathery
Moor !

How have I loved thee, even from the day
When, as a boy, I clomb thy shelving shore,
To gather berries from the rowan-spray ;
Or laved my heated limbs within the pool—
Hid by the foliage from the sunny glare,
And fringed with ferns and verdant mosses cool ;
And paid my forfeit to the Naiad there !
Stream of the Brun ! how little changed art thou !
Still o'er thy dark wave bends the ashen-tree ;
Still brightly gleaming hangs the " wicken-bough " ;
Still do I hear the ancient lullaby—
In their old places all things do I see :
No change is here ; but ah, how changed am I !



Six Portraits.

I.



SPRIGHTLY maiden, with a sprightly name—
A lithesome maiden, and so very tall,
For sixteen years, you would her woman call
That's girlishly inclined to romp and game !
A frolic wilding that 'twere sweet to tame,
But hard ; yet not too hard for him that counts
No *easy* pleasure " pleasure," and that mounts,
Fighting his way, up to the heights of Fame.
A maid so full of provocations sweet,
And words and ways which, while they pique you, please,
That though you vow revenge when next you meet,
And lay such plans as she shall *not* defeat,
And think of all contrivances to tease,
You still must end by falling at her feet !

II.



SEE a face with deeply-graven lines,
Where Love and Hate, *within*, have fiercely
striv'n,
And Love hath won ; but where grim Hate
hath giv'n
Such dreadful dints, that you can tell the signs !
A Nature bold, not one that weakly pines,
For much of storm is mixed with sunshine there ;
Not the close room, but the keen mountain-air

He loves, and strength with tenderness combines.
His life was *broken*—you can see the mark !

His pride was humbled, but his honour saved ;
His pathway led through sombre woods, and dark,
And many a bitter trial here is graved ;
But Love hath conquered, and the Heart hath won,
Where a *cold* nature had been quite undone !

III.

A YOUTHFUL figure, tall, and very lithe ;
Complexion light, grey eyes, and golden
hair,

With ruddy cheeks ; her spirits gay and blithe :
An English maiden, bred in English air—
A sweet Wild Rose, with the fresh rural charm
Of briery hedge, and pastures daisy-pied ;
Her breath a fragrance, as of field and farm—
A nature redolent of the country-side !
A gay, light-hearted maiden, whom you love
For the sweet air and brightness that she brings,
And spreads around, wherever she doth move—
The fairest type of our fair English lasses
(With taper fingers made for wedding rings),—
A maid that sheddeth sunshine where she passes !

IV.

CELT of the Celts ! with all the storm and fire,
Mixed with the virtues, of an ancient race—
To the wild passion of his Celtic sire
Uniting somewhat of his mother's grace.
Married to Music ! Friend to Poesy !
His heart a lute, fine-strung, whereon the wind
Of feeling makes Æolian melody

That doth his own deep-ravished senses bind !
 A lover of the forest, and the wild ;
 A lover of the mountain, and the mere ;
 For he hath followed Nature from a child,
 And on her broad breast findeth ample cheer ;
 His pictures : trees and flowers, and gorgeous skies—
 Nature's wide robe, with its uncounted dyes !

V.

A SYMPATHETIC nature, loved of all—
 Whom all *must* love, since she that love compels ;
 Sweetness entire, without one drop of gall—
 The air around she with her sweetness fills !
 Dark eyes and soft ; a somewhat pensive mien ;
 Complexion suited to a thoughtful mind :
 No meeker nature have I ever seen,
 No gentler maiden would you ever find.
 Her have I known through many a changeful year ;
 The girl I kissed hath grown a woman now ;
 But save this change there doth no change appear,
 For with more modesty she will allow
 My friendly kiss than some that kiss deny,
 So girlish she, and yet so womanly !

VI.

A MAN of middle size and middle age,
 (From out the "middle ages" come, to see
 What this much-boasted age of ours may be !)
 With flowing beard and glittering eye, whose rage
 Is still to turn o'er some quaint-lettered page :
 Deep in the ancients you shall see him pore—
 A pensive statue 'mid the city's roar—

Whilst you proceed upon your pilgrimage !
A man of learning, cold, impassive ? no ;
By nature gentle : tender still, his heart
Hath pleasant places, where the sweet herbs grow
Of Love, and Friendship, and all herbs of grace—
A poet he, without the poet's art,
Whom all must love that look upon his face !

The Warp and the Woof of Life.

LIFE'S warp is prose, of wool or cotton made ;
Our world is work-a-day, and work we *must*,
Earning our bread amid the smoke and dust,
Along unlovely paths, and 'mid the noise of Trade.
But still our Life's-warp may be overlaid,
And crossed and chequered with a silken woof
Of our own weaving ; though the warp be rough,
A lovely-coloured pattern may our Life be made !
And as some gorgeous piece of tapestry,
By queenly hands enwrought in olden days,
Is still admired, though many a century
Of change hath passed, and charmeth every eye,
Our richly-woven Life may win the praise,
And the loud plaudits of posterity !

Two Moods of Feeling.

I.



O H, blissful quiet ! oh, the luxury !
When for a moment business cares remit,
And one surrounded by his books can sit
And read, or think, or on his couch can lie
At ease, and let the fretful world pass by ;
While the tremendous roar grows fainter still,
And yonder city's lamps, from this high hill
Distinctly seen, do light up all the sky !
How pleasant from the " loop-holes of retreat "
To gaze unnoticed on the world below ;
To see (yourself unseen) the crowded street ;
To hear, though distant, all the mighty rout
Made by the million *insects* there that go ;
And, smiling, ask yourself : " What is it all about ? "

II.

Yet other times there are when solitude
And lonely hours oppress—when I would go
And mingle in the vasty crowds that flow
Through yonder city like a human flood—
Would mingle with my fellows, mix my blood
With theirs, and say : Ye are my brothers all ;
Together we will rise, or we will fall.
I know your griefs ; I feel that ye are good ;
I know ten thousand suffer at this hour,
All meekly, silently ; I hear the rain
Of tears that o'er the wide land doth pour !
It were not well for mine own heart, to stand
Upon a height ; I will come down again,
And we will go together, hand in hand !

Manchester Asleep in the Moonlight.

I.



JOURNEYED through the City in the night,
Beneath a sky unclouded ; the full moon
So brightly shone meseemèd it was noon ;
While all around was bathed in magic light !
Day might it be, nor could one deem it " Night ;"
And as I passed through every silent street
Mine eyes were strained, expecting still to meet
One of my kind ; but not one soul in sight !

Where be the watchers ? Is the city dead ?
Was the last deep-toned hour the very last ?
Am I alone on earth ? I solemn said ;
But while I spake I heard the measured tread
Of one lone watcher, as he slowly passed,
Guarding in solitude this " City of the Dead !"

II.

Strange sight is that—a " busy town " asleep !
But stranger still beneath a radiant moon
Casting a light that makes it almost noon,
While twinkleth every star in heaven's blue deep :
With *so much light* one thinks men should not sleep ;
Yet all is silent, and each window, white
With blinds deep-drawn, shows ghastly in the light ;
And as I walk along I scarce refrain to weep !

'Tis light as day ! where be the mighty crowd—
Still surging onward, like a human flood—
Whom late I heard, speaking with voices loud ?
None do I see (save that lone watcher there) ;
Not one, of all the busy multitude
Whose infinite clamour lately rent the air !

III.


A giant City, wrapped in slumber sound ;
Each scene of business silent as the tomb ;
A deathlike stillness in the Merchants' Room,*
That late with hum of traffic did resound ;
Of all the Many no *one* to be found ;
Nor yet one car, or carriage, on the road,
Or heavy wagon, groaning with its load,
Of all the mighty train that lately shook the ground !

And this beneath a moon that shed a light
As of broad noon ; in sooth, 'twas passing strange—
Nay, I have never seen so strange a sight.
Silence and Darkness are meet company ; but Light
Consorts not with deep Silence ! do *thou* range
The silent city ; Cynthia's out to-night !

* The Manchester Exchange.

Human Littleness.

I.

S in the summer-air an insect-cloud,
Rising and falling, passeth swiftly by,
Scarce visible between us and the sky,
So oft, to me, appears this human crowd ;
Then am I deaf unto their clamour loud,
Nor doth one whisper strike my mental ear
Of his whose eloquence leaves him without peer,
And before whom, in humbleness, I have bowed !
As from a distant planet I did gaze
Upon this rolling Earth, I think of man,
And his best triumphs, and his glory's blaze—
I think of them who've won the conqueror's 'bays,
And of all chiefs who've ever led the van,
As merest insects in the sun's bright rays !

II.

In such a mood of thought, upon a day,
I stood at Paris, with the palace grand
Of the high Tuilleries towering at my hand,
While Rank and Fashion trooped in wide array
Through the world's capital—by *place* and *quai*.
I saw the Emperor's bright and splendid bride
Pass through the city, 'mid a crowd that cried,

And rushed, and crushed, and pushed, and blocked the way.

And unto me it seemed an insect-swarm


That busily crowded there about their hive,
(So deftly built to keep them snug and warm)

Being roused from torpor by the loud alarm :

“ Good heavens ! ” thought I, “ how much they are
alive !

And that *queen-bee*, how much she’s made to charm ! ”

Love of Quiet.

 IS soothing sweet at times to step aside
From out the tumult, and the terrible roar
Of the great cities, and where men abide,
And struggle, and strain, and strive, for evermore ;
And with some author of a quiet age
Hold pleasant converse, turning o’er and o’er,
And drinking in the calm at every page
Breathed by that spirit of the days of yore !—
Our Life’s a fever, and there is no rest ;
In the thick, stifling air, I pant for breath ;
I sink with languor, by the heat oppressed :
Ours is a Death in Life, or Life in Death !
And, worn in spirit here, I perish quite :
Oh, for a breeze, from some far-distant height !

A Country Rose.

[FOUND BLOOMING IN THE CITY.]

I.



FOUND, the other day, a Country Rose,
All brightly blooming near the crowded
street,
Right in the city, where the merchants meet—
Where the great tide of business ebbs and flows,
And where (save "Cotton") there is nothing grows !
Surprised was I this lovely Rose to meet ;
And whilst I breathed its fragrance, passing sweet,
I could not help but say : " I wonder how it grows !"
My " Rose," in sooth, 's a fresh, sweet Country Maid,
Transplanted to the city, with its din,
Its thousand goings out and comings in,
And all the noisy intercourse of trade ;
And there she keeps her freshness all the year,
So then a " Country Rose " I call this maiden dear !—

II.

She keeps her freshness, and her innocent ways ;
And if you look into her earnest eyes
You feel her goodness, for *they* tell no lies ;
And I do know she's worthy of all praise ;
And therefore do I wonder all the days,
Since many a ribald jest she's doomed to hear,
And many a wicked glance, and lustful leer


Is cast upon her, as she goes her ways.
God-fearing *must* she be ; to Him she prays,
 (And who shall pray to Him but He shall hear ?)
 'Tis He that gives her strength her cross to bear ;
And she is full of peace, and trust always :
God's blessing, still, be with my "Country Rose,"
And may He shelter her from every wind that blows !

To T. C.

FRIENDSHIP, they say, O Friend, hath long
 been dead—
And "Right departing" saw the Roman
 bard—

And Love and Innocence are seldom wed :
 Such are the phrases you and I have heard.
But we do know that Friendship is alive
 That Love doth house (however hard bested)
With Innocence—if only they could thrive !
 While Truth still finds a shelter for her head.
Friendship survives, and even amid the guile,
 And cruel cunning of a crafty throng,
Where, while they plunder you, the villains smile,
 And all that's weak is crushed by all that's strong—
Friendship survives, for to each other true
Men still are found, O Friend, in me and you.


To H. W.

 THOU know'st, O Friend ! how deep my sympathy
With all that suffer in this world of ours ;
Thou know'st that, to the utmost of my powers,
No man on earth would help more willingly
To lighten the sad burthen that doth lie,
With crushing weight, upon the poor world's heart—
That to this end I ply the poet's art—
Thou know'st to ease all suffering I would try.
Then much more, W——n, should I feel for thee,
When thou, so strong, dost raise a cry of pain,
Who through long years didst often visit me,
And through *mine* eyes, as 't were, didst all things see ;
Nay, if we never more must meet again,
Not seldom shall my thoughts return to thee.

To foreign lands thou journeyest, there to stay
Till the deep wound inflicted on thy heart
Shall cease to bleed : ah, could I stop its smart,
I would recall yon ship, though under-way !
But if I cannot change thy mood to gay,
At least to soothe thee may I here indite
Verse that flows quicker than the hand can write,
Though critic-pen may not approve the lay.
What matters, if sweet truth my verse inspire ?
Should this bear healing to thy wounded heart,
It will have served my own most fond desire.
Then take the verse—to thee 'tis dedicate—
To thee, my Friend, of mine own self a part,
Nor ever yet for whom my friendship can abate !*

* See verses *ante*, entitled "A Bleeding Heart."

The Soul's Yearning after Immortality.

ERE it not better, in reality,
Once did my deep-wrought Soul these
words address,
(Sick with its thoughts and full of weariness !)

Were it not better, said it, with a sigh,
To let the human mind all fallow lie ;
Nor seek at all to climb the lofty height,
Since what we see there is but endless night,
And our sad thoughts oft make us wish to die ?
Oh, no ! the Soul unto itself replied,
'Tis fitter far that we should think and sigh,
For by soft pity is man purified ;
'Tis better we should feel for them that died,
And each poor brother who is born to die—
'Tis meet man's soul in agony should be tried.

Who standeth here, fronting the Eternities
Boldly yet calmly, shall receive a faith
Sublime from heaven ; and all weak fear of death
Shall pass, while love and pity fill his eyes !
Blessèd his tears, and holy are his sighs
That broods in sadness o'er this world below,
And ever weeps to see men suffer so ;—

Oh, well for man to front the Eternities !
If here below a perfect justice ruled,
Ah, who among us might not then despair !
But man by " Fortune " is so oft befooled,
" Fate " seems to strike so much that's good and fair,
So oft the bad doth get the good man's share,
That we *must* think : these things are righted *there* !

In Memoriam S. C.

HOW many a hero dies unknown to fame !
How many a heroine her cross doth bear
Through thorny paths her tender feet that
tear,
And carries to her grave another's blame !
How many a spirit pure is doomed to shame ;
While noble souls are born to sweat and moil
On the hard ways, and lead a life of toil ;
And yet the giddy world spins on the same !
So gentle Spirit, thou—meek Heroine !
Toiling in patience through the darkest days,
Gav'st all to others that to give was thine,
Careless of *self*, and with no thought of praise :
O candid Soul and pure ! when shall we see
A Wife and Mother that resembles thee ?

The Life we Live.

O curas hominum, o quantum est in rebus inane ! —*Persius*.

I.

YOU ask if I am lonely ? No, indeed !
An hour of perfect quiet is to me
So rare, that I esteem it luxury—
A luxury unwonted :—if I read,
Or think, or write, all must be done “at speed !”
It is a time of fever and unrest—
Of hurry and of worry at the best—
And Quiet is a *stranger*, here, indeed !
Our life's a whirlpool ; every mother's son
Is sucked into the vortex, and spins round,
And round and round, until his course is run !
The sight had caused Democritus much fun :
Had the blithe sage here still on earth been found,
He would have laughed, and chaffing, cried “ Well
done !”

II.

Our life's a whirlpool : *all* are spinning round ;
And should you step aside a moment's space,
Your friends, concerned, will look into your face,
And say they hardly think your mind is sound !
Sweet fools ! is there no pleasure to be found
Unless amid your clamour and your noise ?
Does Life, then, offer me no higher joys

Than those comprised within your Pleasure's round?
May I not sit and think for one brief hour?
Wouldst have me treading, still, the giddy maze?
Wouldst have me wasting what I have of power?
Nay, then, I will not trifle all my days;
I will not even waste one precious hour:
Unhand me, now, and let me go my ways!

III.

Seek, if thou wilt, the Siren, Pleasure, I
Will go with Nature to her inmost cell,
And for a while with her in quiet dwell:—
On mossy couch within the woods to lie,
And look through leaves into the deep blue sky,
While zephyrs play amid the whispering boughs,
And each broad tree a grateful shadow throws,
That were a pleasure, that were luxury!
But not to *thee*, whom Nature never drew,
Who never felt'st the beauty of a flower,
To whom forget-me-nots are only "blue,"
And violets sweet "of somewhat purplish hue!"
Nor ever linger'dst in a woodland bower,
To drink their fragrance, 'mid the falling dew!



To G. M.



WORLDLY world, O M——r ! we are told :
“Friendship is dead,” and “Love is a
disease.”

Ah me ! in “ searching after truth,” we freeze ;
And poorer are we than those men of old.
Light without warmth, alas ! when we are cold,
Can it avail ? ’Tis by the *heart* we live ;
Oh, to the heart then let us freely give,
And it shall be repaid us many fold !
M——r, this truth full timely hast thou proved,
Pouring thy wealth of heart on all around :
Much-loving thou, thyself art much beloved ;
Nor voice of child, or bird, nor hum of bee,
Nor aught that *touches*, in the world were found,
But must awaken thy quick sympathy.



My Cheerful Neighbour.

WHY are you always cheerful? Listen, Friend !
And in good season I will tell you why
I go upon my way so cheerfully :
'Tis not that I have always gained mine end ;
'Tis not that Fortune still "good things" would send ;
'Tis not that "all went merrily" in love ;
'Tis not that everyone my friend did prove ;
(Alas, but seldom do we find a friend !)
'Tis not for *this* that you me cheerful see,
But from another cause that shall be shown ;
The real reason will I tell to thee,
That by all other folks it may be known,
Nor any longer seem a mystery
To any that I meet in country or in town.

II

For little, in sooth, can I Dame *Fortune* thank,
Though not an ingrate would I ever be ;
But what has Fortune ever done for me ?
She never gave me wealth, nor ever rank ;
Nor was my balance large at any bank.
Maids I have met, and found them to my mind,
But ne'er a wife, since Fortune proved unkind ;
Then how can you expect that I should Fortune thank,
Who let me climb the hill as best I might ;
Who never lent to me a helping hand ;
Nor favoured me at all, by day or night ?
Nay, then, I boldly say, I'm not her debtor !
And since she let me win by mine own hand,
If she can rob me now, I say, why let her !

III.

The reason I am cheerful, Friend, is this,
(While I am writing here the wind doth howl,
And in the neighbouring churchyard shrieks the ghoul !)
I do not seek imaginary bliss,
I find this life sufficient *as it is* !
Hopes I have had—a crowd—that now are flown ;
And many a one is dead that I have known ;
And some that I have loved I may not kiss ;
Yet is life pleasant, and full many a spring
Of joy still bubbles, sparkling, on my way ;
Each wild flower blooms, and every bird doth sing
For mine own special pleasure, I should say ;
Nay, it would seem (and that is the same thing)
For *me* the glorious sun doth rise from day to day !

IV.

And the “sky-pageants” that he paints for me
(Hast thou not seen their gilding of bright gold !
Hast not admired their colours manifold !)
Are hung there, in the great World-Gallery !
And all this splendour nothing costeth me,
Painted by the Grand Prince of Painters ; still
I enter there, and wander at my will ;
Nothing I pay, since everything is free !
(And the Great Gallery’s open, too, for *thee*,
If thou would’st only lift thy leaden eyes ;
And all the beauty of the land and sea ;
Of many a kingdom dost thou hold the key :
Walk, when thou wilt, into a paradise
Whose infinite loveliness was meant for thee !)

V.

And oh, the music that I heard to-day,
Not twenty paces from my cottage-door ; .
(And yesterday I heard it, and before)
One darling thrush did tune a heavenly lay—
A song divine, and on a winter's day !
The sweet-voiced herald of the beauteous spring
Trilled out his loudest, while with dripping wing
He perched upon a tree beside the way.
Oh, what a lesson of bright cheerfulness,
Amid the snow to hear that gladsome Voice—
Joy's own sweet note, heard in the wilderness !
All drunk with rapture, I the bird did bless
As if divine ; and still I must rejoice,
And think, and dream, of his melodiousness !

VI.

Thrice-welcome harbinger of lovely spring !
Thou teachest and thou preachest well indeed ;
And much doth man that eloquent lesson need.
Dear Bird ! that there amid the snow couldst sing,
And only when the night fell spread thy wing,
Seemed it *sweet chiding* when I heard thee now,
Singing with rapture from the frozen bough ;
Nay then, Sir Thrush ! pray tell me, was it so ?
Thou told'st us of the coming of a time
Of gladness and of mirth, of May and June ;
Thou sang'st of more than I can put in rhyme ;
No thought hadst thou of winter's snow and rime ;
Of blue skies and bright flowers was all thy tune :
Oh, that man's spirit could with *thy* spirit chime !

VII.

On every hand are we taught cheerfulness :
Hast never seen the pretty Celandine *
(Precocious plant, that is a pet of mine !)
All bravely striving 'mid a wilderness
Of snow and ice t' unfold its loveliness ?
One kindly ray is all it needeth there
To venture forth, and show its beauty rare,
All in the cold, and bitter-biting air !—
Then how can we, with these soft melodies
From the dear English song-birds that we love,
And all the poms and glooms of English skies,
And all these flowers, with their uncounted dyes,
Cherish a wish 'mid other scenes to rove !—
Why not be cheerful in this paradise ?

VIII.

Once I hoped much—more perhaps than Life could bring ;
Yet, if I spake the truth, I might say *less*,
For neither rank nor wealth means “ happiness : ”
Rank bringeth cares, and wealth oft taketh wings ;
And he that's rank or wealth, must feel the stings
Of Care and Fear, and all the heavy weight
That hangs upon the man of high estate ;—
Th' unweighted man it is that gaily sings !
Now, I expect no more than life can bring ;
And where I go I find my happiness ;
And if Dame Fortune, by some chance, should fling
Into my lap some favour, it were well ;
But should the Lady Fortune me not bless,
'Twill be the same : I can be happy still !

* *Ranunculus Ficaria* (*Ficaria verna*). The Lesser Celandine. This lovely little flower sometimes struggles into bloom so early as February, under the circumstances above stated.

IX.

And ye, that daily toil for daily bread,
E'en your hard lot is brighter than it seems,
(Amid the dark I see the light that beams :)
The very poor whom he doth choose doth wed ;
Nor with love crosses is much feverèd :
Small are his wants, and if he prudent be,
Oft may be happy—both his wife and he—
And on the hardest pillow rest a tranquil head.
While they who're born to rank, or unto wealth,
Must feel the heat, and tread the giddy maze
Of Fashion's life—must break the laws of health,
Turning the days to nights, the nights to days ;
And 'mid soft, gilded trifling live always ;
And perhaps be scorched by pleasure's tempting blaze !

X.

Many that moan, if they but knew, would sing !
" All that so brightly glitters is not gold ! "
If the deep woes of these *poor* Rich were told,
The world would say : This wealth is not the thing !
I thought this man was happy as a king ;
But now I see, though he is rich in shares,
In land and gold, he miserably fares,
And of all men would be the last to sing !
Strive not so hard, O Friend, to gather more,
That hast enough to feed both thee and thine ;
No cruel wolf is howling at *thy* door ;
Safe from all want art thou at any time ;
Then dig not thou again in Mammon's mine,
Since here's enough to feed both thee and thine !

XI.

Cease thou to strive with thy poor neighbour there ;
Quit all the haunts of Commerce, and for good ;
Build a snug house beside a pleasant wood ;
Let all sweet rural things be now thy care ;
And be content that thou hast won thy share :
Thus shall thy life be lengthened and renewed,
(For "just enough" is more than plentitude)
While all thine offspring blossom fresh and fair.
Our City Merchants kill themselves to *live* :
Forgetful of the "golden mean," they seek
Base lucre still ; into the cave they dive
Of Mammon deep, and still, and still they strive,
In motley throng : see how they sweat and reek !
O foolish men ! to kill yourselves to *live* !

XII.

I am not worldly poor, nor worldly rich ;
And what I have I gain with my right hand ;
Yet is no man more cheerful in this land :
Then say if I am poor or wealthy, which ?
No contumely I'll brook ; am I, then, rich ?
If poor are all that labour, I am poor.
One thing is sure : I keep an open door ;
Then say if I am poor, or wealthy, which ?
No man that lives dares shove me in the ditch ;
Nor stand I at the beck of duke or lord ;
Then say if I am poor, or wealthy, which ?
I cover not with bribes one single hand ;
I never buy with gold one flattering word ;
Yet is no man more cheerful in this land !


XIII.

Nor wealth, nor rank, nor fame brings happiness ;
From thine own heart must every joy still spring ;
And he is richest that can freest sing !
Whose eyes are open to all loveliness
Must still be wealthy, though he's penniless !
With a true heart and mind whom Heaven doth bless,
He hardly feels the tooth of keen distress ;
And still is known by a blithe cheerfulness.
Wisely he thinks, and learns, at length, to find
His happiness in what is near at hand ;
Slowly unlocks the kingdom of the mind ;
Proves, by degrees, the wealth of his own heart ;
Sees all that's lovely, both by sea and land ;
And feeleth more—far more—than he can e'er impart.

XIV.

Nor ever yet hath painter painted, poet sung,
Or any Master of sweet Harmony
Told all that in the human heart doth lie,
Though these have sung, and writ, and painted long !
Whole treasures yet are hidden ! Art is young !
The world is full of beauty still unseen !
And if one singeth loud of WHAT HATH BEEN,
WHAT IS TO BE doth merit a louder song !
Who says that Life is barren, here below,
When half its beauty, half its richness lies
Untasted still, like apples on the bough ?
Why do I hear these men complaining so ?
'Tis that they wander with deep-closed eyes ;
Nor hardly see the sun that shineth in heaven now !

To Mrs. C.

 LADY of the noble heart ! whose hand
Is ever open, and whose gentle ways
Have made thee deeply loved through all
the land,

Fain would I pen some verses in thy praise.
But to express thy goodness I must seek

In vain for words : no words at my command
Would fittingly set forth thy nature meek,
Or paint the picture thy deserts demand !

And yet, in sooth, thou wouldst not thank for fame :

Enough for thee in secret to do good ;
Enough for thee to bear an honoured name ;

Like to that "herb of grace," by yonder wood,
Which, though it reareth high no gaudy bloom,
Yields, as you pass it, a most rich perfume !



Three Sonnets.

Written at the time when the oppressed Nationalities of Eastern Europe were struggling for liberty.

I.

WHO'S he that *dreameth*? do I hear One say,
An honest man, and earnest worker, he.
I do not dream, O Friend! I tell thee free,
Nor love I dreamers; my world's "work-a-day."
With my right hand, I cut my upward way;—
Fighting for Truth and Right, I still would press
On to the front, and every wrong redress;
And in Truth's praise I'll sing, too, if I may.
Deep-seated in my heart is hate of Wrong—
Nay, I have sworn men shall not suffer so;
Or if they suffer, it shall not be long!
Bold words—too bold, alas, I am but one
Of a vast multitude who smart to know
That wickedness and wrong must still go on.

II.

Strange-sounding phrase, strange words: "Must still
go on!"
But true, alas! too impotent are we
To stem the roaring tide of Fate's dark sea!
Still the oppressed beneath the yoke must groan;
Still must we hear the galled nations moan;
Nor lift a hand unto the righteous sword;
Nay, caution bids us say no single word—
Bids us be still and silent as a stone;

Lest they who now are drowned in bitter tears
Of their own shedding should be drowned in blood—
Lest he's *too suddenly* "freed" that fetters wears !
And unto caution each must lend his ears
That in this world would work for common good ;
So wickedness and wrong go on for years.

III.

But not for aye, O God ! for ever ? No !
'Mid the dark clouds is there no dawning light ?
Shall day *not* come ? Will't be for ever night ?
By heaven ! in mine own heart, I think not so !
My faith is, still, that the great world doth grow—
Doth grow and tend, if slowly, toward the Right,
The True : we sail on to the Light,
Though 'mid deep shade, and tempest-tossed, we go !
I hear Great Voices urge to nobler deeds—
Deeds of self-sacrifice and tenderness—
While they bring succour unto him that needs,
And cherish in their hearts the warmth of love
For all that live. And these men do I bless ;
And my faith holds in One that rules above !

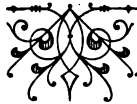




TRIBUTARY LINES

TO THE

POETS AND OTHERS.



Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays !
Oh ! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.—*Wordsworth.*



Lines on Cowper.*

O MILD forerunner of a mighty band
Of poets, who have made this English land
For ever famous ! He who loves not thee
Is dead to all the charms of Poesy :
Winter and summer are alike to *him* ;
The early " primrose by the river's brim "
Is but a primrose ; not the glorious sky,
Lit with its lamps that blaze eternally,
Doth stir his soul ! and yonder orient Sun,
Who in his glory rising hath begun
His grand old task as Painter, doth for *him*
Waste all his colours ! Ah, his eyes are dim,
Opaque and blind ! But such blind folk, I ween,
Are still too often in our country seen !

The sacred flame which we call Poesy—
Best gift of Heaven—had been extinguished nigh ;
It feebly flared when gentle Cowper came,
Fired with mild passion, and renewed the flame.

* It may be necessary to explain that this, and most of the succeeding "tributes" to authors, not one of which has any pretensions beyond the slightest and most sketchy "outline," but the didactic tone of which will probably strike the critical reader, were originally written with no view to publication, but simply to circulate amongst a number of young people of the writer's acquaintance, with the object of exciting their interest in the authors referred to.

Him followed Burns and Wordsworth ; theirs the praise
Of leading back to Truth, and Nature's ways :
Truth ever noble, Nature ever true !
Nature and Truth, may I still worship you
With my whole heart, as I was wont to do !

Dear, gentle Cowper ! I have thought with tears
Of all thy sufferings through the lengthened years !
Forced from thy mother, when a child, to part,
Who else could meet the yearning of thy heart—
So tender, fond, so shrinking, delicate—
Formed but to love, and knowing not to hate ?
'Tis hearts, O Cowper, such as thine, that prove
The depth and richness of a Mother's love !
'Tis hearts, O Cowper, such as thine, that miss
The rapturous sweetness of a mother's kiss—
A sweetness that methinks is e'en above,
And doth exceed, the kiss of her we love !
And when, a little later, Cupid came,
And shot his arrow with unerring aim,
Again, O Child of Sorrow ! it was thine,
Robbed of thy soul's fond mistress, to repine.
And later still, the shadows darker grew,—
The rolling years did but the grief renew
That crush'd thy soul, and crush'd thy body, too ! *

Yet oft Religion, Piety sincere,
Came to thy aid, and taught thee how to bear.
Nor least of all the aid the Muses gave :
The sovereign'st power of solace that they have

* Alluding to the poet's distressing fits of madness.

Was thine, O Poet, as thy verses prove—
Thrice blessèd they whom the dear Muses love !

I love thee, Cowper, for thy gentleness !
Sweet are thy verses, too, although with less
Than Milton's force they fire the pulse ; yet they
Are such as shall be read for many a day.

Not words alone thou giv'st, but of thy heart
Each one who reads thee, Poet, has a part.

Nature than Art is greater far to me.
What matters all our ——'s great mastery

Of language, or of verse ; no poet he,
" Word-painter " only, even at his best.

Take —— and all his school, and, for the rest,
Leave me to walk through Nature's wide domain,
Guided by Truth. O Poet, once again

I thank thee, from my heart ! Thy verse hath power
With me, at least, to charm the tranquil hour :

Truthful always, instructing heart and mind—
Who seeks for solace, he shall solace find

In thy soft-flowing, tender lines, and I
Do think the world will not so soon let die
These most sweet echoes of thy gentle voice.

O Britain ! favoured land, I do rejoice
To breathe thy air, filled ever with the sound
Of the Great Voices ; and I tread thy ground
With reverent step. May poets still be found
To preach the Pure, and point the *higher* way,
As did my gentle Cowper in his day !



Lines on Reading Professor Masson's "Story of Chatterton's Life."

I READ of Chatterton, "the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride,"
In Masson's book ; and as I read, I cried :
"Oh, cursèd Pride, to kill our greatest joy ! "

'Twas hard, O Chatterton, without the praise
Of kindred souls, to "live laborious days,"
Reading and poring deep into the night ;
And poring still, when came the morning-light,
Thy body wearied by the soul's unrest—
Honoured by few, by fewer still caressed ;
While Dulness flourished, and blind Fortune blessed
Inferior souls—withholding still the bays
From thee, the author of undying lays !
But ah, misguided Youth ! thou should'st have brought
Sweet Patience to thy aid. Thou should'st have
thought
Of them that went before, as sorely tried,
Contemning not religion, and thy pride
Repressing still. Nay, Knowledge is a curst,
Unholy thing, whenever she comes *first*,

And Wisdom *second* ! 'Twas not thine alone
To suffer penury ;—the world doth groan
E'en now, and twice ten thousand make their moan
To heaven, beseeching the kind Deity
To grant their prayer ; and still I hear the cry,
Too doleful, of oppressed humanity !
With Patience, Poet, and fair Truth to guide
Thy wayward steps, methinks thou hadst not died
The shameful death and foul of suicide.
Steep is the hill of Fame ; but thou hadst clomb
Its topmost height, and at thy honoured tomb
Thousands had gathered. Ah, could nothing save
Thy splendid promise from the pauper's grave ?
Thou shouldst have thought of Milton, in his prime—
The Master-Sprite who built the lofty rhyme,
And charmed the nations. He, bereft of light—
The gracious light of heaven, in endless night
Still darkly groping, sang his Maker's praise
In trumpet-tones ; and penned the tuneful lays
Whose echoes, world-wide, still reverberate,—
Though *blind*, among the *Sons of Light* he sate—
Thou shouldst have thought of *him*, and cherished hope !
And others still, like him, have had to grope
Their devious way through this dark world and wide,—
Of *them* thou shouldst have thought, and checked thy
pride.

A lofty lesson to the world is taught
By thy short life, so dark and anguish-fraught,
O hapless Youth ! In vain the Soul relies
Upon herself, and all the world defies :

If truth be outraged, and there be no love
But love of *self*, ah, then, the Powers above
Are mov'd with anger ! Nemesis pursues
Thee, and o'ertakes, and Justice claims her dues.
Such thy dark fate, O poet ! yet *some* tears
Shall fall from pitying eyes, when thy brief years
Are counted—called away to meet thy doom
In Life's fair Spring, still in thy Boyhood's bloom !
Who speaks of thee : "the Wondrous Youth," will say;
Let "Wondrous Youth " thy title be for aye !





Lines on Wordsworth.

POET of Lakeland ! Poet of all time !
Vainly I seek meet words to sing thy praise.
Ah, were it given to imitate thy lays,
Then might I hope to build, in lofty rhyme,
A lasting tribute—monument sublime !

O mighty Minstrel ! from my earliest youth
Thee have I pondered, thee who loved the truth ;
Whose muse so chaste, whose page, without a stain,
The innocent maid might read and read again.
Dull must he be of soul that hears unmoved
Poor Margaret's story, who so deeply loved.
Heart-sick with hope-deferred, the weary years
Rolled on and on, and brought her—only tears ;
And yet she held Expectancy her guest,
Hope still she nursed—was always *to be* blest
Unto the last, when her pure spirit fled
To that dim shore which all are bound to tread.
And shrined within our hearts is Emily,
For aye, " maid of the blasted family ! "
And blest, thrice blest, the Poet who can move

With sweetest sympathy, and purest love,
Our human hearts for even that dumb thing—
Companion always of her suffering—
The mystic milk-white Doe of Rylstone Woods,
That left its native fells, and murmuring floods,
To follow its sweet mistress to her grave,
And guard e'en that—such love dumb creatures have !

Loving the mountains with a passionate love,
O'er rocky Cumbria I wont to rove ;
O'er Westmorland's green dales, and craggy fells,
And cloud-capped heights, where only silence dwells,
" Full many a time and oft," I wandered free ;
And ever, mighty Minstrel, led by thee.
The Great Enchanter there had waved his wand :—
'Twas mine to wander in a charmed land,
Brimful of mystery ; where every sound
And sight enthralled—where all was *haunted* ground !
I heard the waters dash, the thunders roll,
The storm-winds rave, and joy was in my soul.
Mounting the crest of many a mist-clad hill,
A strange delight would oft my being thrill :
Sublime it seemed, and god-like, wandering free
Amid the roll of heaven's artillery !—
To stand aloft upon the mountains hoar,
Unscathed, amid the tempest's mighty roar !
Of earth one seemed not, rather of the skies—
An element, a power that never dies,
An essence, or a spirit—not of earth,
But something heavenly, with a heavenly birth !
Poet of Nature ! it was thine to teach

Truths to her votaries far beyond their reach.
Blind yearnings oft were felt, sights seen, sounds heard
 That had no meaning until thou appeared,—
 Nature's own High Priest ! Great Interpreter
 Of her Arcana ! O blest Prophet, Seer !
 What shall I call thee ? would I were indued
 With power to express my fervent gratitude !

Through Nature's far recesses wandering free,
 And musing deeply, I have heard, with thee,
 " The still sad music of humanity ! "
 A chastening thought, O Poet, and mine eye
 Hath still " kept watch o'er man's mortality."
 Thanks for thy teaching, Wordsworth, though I hear
 The cry of Misery, yet I lack not cheer.
 E'en from the wail of nations, there shall spring
 Thoughts that shall soothe the thoughtful—thoughts
 that bring
 A grateful balm to the poor, troubled mind
 That yearning asks, and yet doth never find
 An answer—sounding the mysterious sea
 That hath *no bottom*—dread eternity !
 If recompense were none for misery,
 " Alas, methinks, 'twere better not to be ! "
 How oft would be the cry ; but Heaven is kind—
 Eternal Justice errs not : we are blind !
 Nature benign, to every ear attent,
 Doth softly whisper words of solacement.
 The kindly Nurse still beckons to her breast
 Her suffering Child, that he may there find rest.
 Oh, blessed calm that I have often proved

In solitude, when tracing scenes beloved !
And still, for me, not "Sorrow's keenest wind"—
"Affliction's heaviest shower," but I shall find
Some gentle solace for my troubled mind.

Imagination, the most sacred power—

 "Most glorious faculty to man assigned,"
His blessed privilege and gracious dower,
 The sweetest boon vouchsafed to human-kind !
By thee attended let me always live,
To taste the noblest joys that earth can give !





Lines on Keats.

I weep for Adonais—he is dead !
Oh, weep for Adonais ! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head !

Shelley.

WHEN fell Disease had struck the poet low,
Said dying Keats : “ *I feel the flowers
grow
From out my wasted body even now !*”

Beautiful thought ! and now the flowers bloom
From out his grave for ever ! At his tomb
Stand crowds for ever weeping ; and there come
A thousand, thousand pilgrims from the west,
To see the place where gentle Keats doth rest ! *

Is fame that follows death all barren, say ?
Or hath Keats' gentle self heard Shelley's lay—
That lofty tribute to the honoured dead,
So nobly sung, which all the world hath read ?
If so it be, then must the soul, sore-tried
On earth, of Keats rest now, all satisfied !

* Keats died and was buried at Rome in the year 1821. In 1822 the world lost Shelley, who lies buried a few paces only from his friend. Since then unnumbered thousands have come to weep over the graves of the two youthful poets ; not only from Europe, but even from the far west of America, Keats having enjoyed a certain popularity in that country almost from the first.

Flower-loving Poet ! would the power were mine
In thy dear praise to pen one lasting line.
But ah, 'tis seldom to poor mortals given
To snatch below that blessed light from heaven !
Yet some faint tribute would I here essay,
If to be read for but one single day,
And then forgot.—Not so the splendid song,
Sung by our Shelley, whose sweet echoes long
Have filled the world ; nor e'er shall die away,
But swell on still, and charm the world for aye.

“ Sore-tried on earth,” and yet whoever breathed
A nobler, richer life ? whoever wreathed
Poetic garlands with so free a hand
As thou, O Keats ! to whom the Poet's land
Was native soil, thyself “ to th' manor born ?”
Not such as thou could Fame afford to scorn !
Nor blind thy critic even, when his pen
He flesh'd within thy quivering heart ; the spleen
Of politics, the rancour it doth breed
Was half the motive prompting to the deed.
But was it meet that thou shouldst martyred be ?
Were such things needed to set England free ?
Let History answer ; let me only say,
I thank kind Heaven that I live to-day.*

Still higher martyrdom, O Keats, was thine :
When on thy earthly path began to shine
Hope's brightest ray, and the sweet purple light
Of Love did bathe thy spirit in delight

* Party feeling ran very high at the time, as the reader of History will be aware ; and Keats was undoubtedly one of the victims.

And bliss unending, a grim figure stood
 Before thee at the feast, and froze thy blood—
 A spectre gaunt, that beckoned to the flood
 O'er which the grisly Charon, 'mid the dark
 And Stygian night, for ever guides his bark !
 Disease, more fatal than the critic's tongue,
 Or pen most biting, came on thee with strong,
 Fell swoop, and struck thee low ! Then black Despair,
 Relentless fiend, seized, dragged thee to his lair,
 And tortured thy young soul. 'Twas as a leap
 From heaven to hell ! There, in the abysses deep,
 Amid the blackness, plunged thy soul amain ;
 Nor ever could find light, or star again ! †
 At length kind Severn came, thy constant friend,
 Magician-like, and exorcised the fiend !
 To Friendship thus devoted power was given
 To bind and heal ; and black Despair was driven
 To where he hid his hateful face before !
 To Keats's tortured soul returned, once more,
 A halcyon calm ; and in that blessed mood
 He passed from earth, to join the Wise and Good.

Oh, what a treasure of sweet Poesy
 Was lost with Keats ! And such shall be the cry
 For ever : regret, and tenderest love,
 And tearful sympathy, the world shall move
 To read his page : to-morrow as to-day,
 "A thing of beauty is a joy for aye."

† Keats's state of feeling, at this time, must have been terrible. "Here am I," said he to Severn, "with desperation in death that would disgrace the commonest fellow."

In the Eternal city, now, he calmly sleeps !
And one is there, in watchfulness, that keeps
His grave for ever planted with the flowers
He loved so well ; while pilgrims at all hours
Pass from the west, and pluck from off his tomb
One flower—preserved in their far Western home
With fondest care, and prized all things above ! *
Such is our reverence for thee, such our love,
O gentle Keats, on earth too sorely tried—
Now hath thy soul her longing satisfied ! *

* The *custode* of the cemetery where Keats lies buried is directed to keep his grave *constantly planted* ; but such is the number of people who come to worship at this poetic shrine ; and so eager their desire to carry away with them some memento of the poet, be it only a *single flower*, that the *custode* has to be constantly re-planting the grave. It is noticed that a very large proportion of these poetic pilgrims are from the Western Continent. My authority for the above facts is Mr. Severn himself, the personal friend of Keats, to whose devotion I have wished above to pay my humble but eager and heartfelt tribute.

* Alluding to the hope, fondly cherished by Keats, that he would, after death, "be numbered among the British poets."





Lines on Reperusing Tennyson's "In Memoriam."

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;
And what are they, when these remain
The ruined shells of hollow towers ?—" *In Memoriam.*"

NAY, mighty Master of all Melody !
This lofty lay of thine, it shall not die—
Thou sweetest Singer of the British choir
Of noble singers ! While the sacred fire
Of Poesy shall burn in Britain, still
The echo of thy lofty strains shall fill
Her mountains and her valleys. Nay, when she
Hath sunk ten fathom deep beneath the sea,
Another world shall listen to thy song ;
For, though the Nations die, the Muse is ever young !
O blessed Singer ! to thy voice have I
Full often listened till its melody
My soul hath ravished, and so utterly
That, listening to it, almost I could die !
So passing sweet those wondrous strains of thine—
An earthly song in which the angels join.

Yea, thoughtful Spirit ! I have learnt with thee
The hollow teaching of the age to see.
Her place I would that Knowledge knew it more ;
Though she is good, yet Wisdom goes before.
He not too much but all too little knows
Who knows the most. Yet knowledge ever grows—
Who would arrest her progress might as well
Attempt to stay the vasty ocean's swell—
Her course is onwards, onwards !—It is well.

Her course is onwards ! And a halo bright
Doth sit upon her shining head—the light,
Say, doth it dazzle vision ? Turn thy sight
A little onward, but more *upward* yet,
Where Wisdom calmly on her throne doth sit.
How feeble was the light thou saw'st e'en now
To yon bright flame that burns on Wisdom's brow !
Then bow the knee, with folded hands adore ;
Knowledge is good, but Wisdom goes before !
On bended knee, with folded hands, we'll say :
Knowledge is dawn, but Wisdom is the day !

In pride of knowledge, pride of pomp and power,
In the old time, 'tis writ : " Men built a tower
To scale the heavens." *We* build them every hour,
And vainly seek the lofty heights to climb !
Ah, what avails to Man, the Child of Time,
His knowledge and his lore, unless he give
His heart to Wisdom ? 'Tis by faith we live.
That miracle is wrought by Love sublime—
More wondrous yet than aught in olden time !

Then bow the knee, with folded hands adore ;
Knowledge is good, but Wisdom goes before !
On bended knee, with folded hands, we'll say :
Knowledge is dawn, but Wisdom is the day !

Say, noblest type of manhood here below,
In whom all knowledge centres, dost *thou* know
The primal cause of Being—yea, thou must ?
“ Alas, my knowledge is as naught : I trust,
I love, admire, worship, and' wonder, still—
By faith I live, the rest is Heaven's will.”
Then bow the knee, with folded hands adore ;
Knowledge is good, but Wisdom goes before !
On bended knee, with folded hands, we'll say :
Knowledge is dawn, but Wisdom is the day !





Lines on Charles Lamb.

[WHO WROTE UNDER THE NAME OF "ELIA."]

Oh, he was good, if e'er a good man lived !—*Wordsworth.*



THOUSAND times, O Lamb ! have I turned
o'er

Thy pages, "potent over smiles and tears,"
And laughed with Elia, or with Elia wept.

'Tis not with some as with "the common herd"
Of writers, whose dull, prosy tomes, once read,
Are placed upon the shelves, or stowed away,
To be disturbed again but when the dust
Has grown too thick upon them. Then the maid,
Perchance, will, as she whisks about her broom,
Turn o'er the dingy volumes. But with some,
A chosen few—choice spirits—'tis not so.
The charming Virgil, and Horatius rare,
All-grasping Shakespeare, Milton half divine,
The thoughtful Wordsworth, noble Tennyson—
Those mighty masters of harmonious verse !
Small is the dust that gathers on the shelf
Where these are laid ! And near to these you'll find

De Quincey oft, and charming old Montaigne—
 With me at least—and still on the same shelf,
 Or near it, I would have, in easy reach,
 Tear-moving Richter, and delightful Lamb :
 Small is the dust that gathers upon these !
 And poor at heart, as poor in head, the man
 Who, in such glorious company, shall not find
 A potent antidote to half the ills
 That human flesh is heir to. He has here
 Society, and of the noblest kind.

There are in England who would make complaint
 Of British pride, pretence, exclusiveness ;
 But hasten, reader, come and follow me :
 I'll lead thee to a company far higher
 Than any that shall place thee under ban,
 In this proud England, Enter thou with me :
 Behold around thee, not alone the Great
 And Noble of our country, thou hast here
 All that are Great and Good of human-kind !
 Well may the scholar greet *him* with a smile
 Who would complain of such exclusiveness !
 The wisdom of the ages not in vain
 Hath passed into his mind ; not in vain
 His heart hath fed upon the noblest thoughts.
 " Society," to *him*, is not alone the crowd
 Who strut, or lounge, within the courtly hall—
 Of wider compass is the word to him.
 The Lofty and the Beautiful, the Good,
 The Wise, the Brave, the Noble, all that's Best—
 Each hero and each heroine, by turns,

Shall "entertain" the scholar at his wish.
 Oh ! there is solace in the world of books,
 And gentle healing for the wounded heart,
 As every thoughtful "Child of Sorrow" knows.

And Elia found the solace that *he* sought
 In books, or in the company of a friend,
 When the black cloud that lowered upon his home
 Had threatened ruin to the peace within.
 He bore upon his heart the wounds and scars
 Of the dark years ; but from his gentle lips
 Escaped no word of murmuring or reproach—
 No sound, or sign of the deep pain within—
 In silent anguish he had learnt to bear ! *

What is't that breeds the cynic? Misery,
 Friendship betrayed, or unrequited love,
 Or home that is not home : hearts that are bruised,
 And cruelly torn by hands they would have kissed,—
 Some shock of fortune, or some evil chance.

* Allusion is here made to the sad circumstances detailed by Talfourd in his "Final Memorials of Charles Lamb." Lamb's only sister (Mary), who survived him many years, and over whom throughout his whole life he so tenderly, self-sacrificingly, and devotedly watched, was liable to occasional fits of insanity of the most violent and distressing character. Whilst suffering under one of these terrible attacks, she had the misfortune to *kill her own mother* ! The painful anxiety endured by Lamb, and the patience and fortitude of which he gave proof under circumstances so peculiarly distressing, render Talfourd's story a most pathetic one.

The "gentle-hearted Charles" was of the *peculiarly* unfortunate. He was educated at Christ's Hospital, was an excellent Latinist, and had he not laboured under an impediment of speech would, it is said, have succeeded to an exhibition in one of the universities. He wrote a tragedy, "John Woodvil," which John Kemble, "the stately manager of Drury Lane" Theatre, refused or "declined" to bring out. He also wrote an afterpiece, "Mr. H.," which was accepted, indeed, but only to be *kissed* down, chiefly by the occupants of the Drury Lane pit. This last circumstance lead "Elia" to pen an article more diverting than venomous—he was incapable of venom—"On the different kinds of Serpents." He says :—"They are creatures of remarkably cold digestion, and chiefly haunt *pits* and low grounds !" But Lamb's admirable "Essays" have never failed of an appreciative public, though a too limited one.

In vain did Misery seek to make of Lamb
 The tiger, some have proved. His gentle heart,
 His kindly nature did not change ; he grew
 A little sadder only, not less sweet.
 " From the most gentle creature nursed in fields
 Had been derived his name : " his nature, too.
 " Affections warm as sunshine, free as air "
 Were his, " humour, and wild, instinctive wit."
 Cynic he could not be, therefore became
 A humorist, the " delightfulest " of all !

Still, for the thousandth time, and yet
 Into the second thousandth time, I turn
 The well-thumbed pages of the favoured tome—
 Read oftener by the flickering light of lamp,
 Or candle dimly burning, than by daylight.
 Day seems too garish for so quaint a mind ;
 And gas too modern, and too glaring, far.
 By candlelight hath Elia oft confessed
 He loved to write the most ; and by this light
 Methinks he should be read, if you would catch
 In all its fulness that strange humour, quaint,
 Which lights up Elia's page—our Elia's own—
 Dear Lamb's delightful vein, resembling none !

The humorous Sage of Chelsea hath foretold
 That in the future there shall come a time
 When he that hath the virtue *not* to write
 Shall from the treasury of the State receive
 Reward in money, for the benefit
 He thereby shall confer upon his kind !

But whoso readeth Elia's page will oft
Lament the virtue sought by Chelsea's Seer.
Light had he thrown, that's now for ever quenched,
Upon a hundred themes—peculiar light—
And we had owed to him a larger debt,
Had he but written more who wrote so well.

Nay Elia, say, was it in mild revenge
For the sad fate of thy poor "tragedy,"
Or hapless issue of thine "afterpiece,"
That thou becam'st thus *niggard* of thine ink—
Casting aside thy pen with which, most like
A cunning wizzard, thou wert wont to work
Thy wondrous magic on the printed page?
If so it was, then would I relegate
The sibilant fools that greeted "gentle Charles"
With snake-like hissings from old Drury's pit
Unto the deeper pit, named *bottomless* ! *

O Elia, lover of the Ancient ! oft,
How very oft, have I, whilst pacing through
The empty rooms of some old "haunted" hall,
In thought reverted to my gentle Lamb,
And fondly wished : had I but Elia's pen,
To speak the weirdness of the place, and fill
These empty halls with Voices of the Past !

* Many have regretted the fact that Lamb, who wrote so peculiarly and so well, should have written so little. A recent enthusiastic writer, referring to this point says, "Instead of writing only two volumes of essays, Elia should have written a dozen. He had read, heard, thought, and seen enough to furnish matter for twice that number. Oh, that Elia, like Mr. Spectator, had printed himself out before he died !" And the same writer goes on to say, "For myself, I would rather read the poorest scrap from Elia's pen than the best productions of some of the most popular of modern authors." In anything that fell from Lamb's delightful lips or pen, there was an individuality that at once stamped it as Elia's, and nobody's else.

But now, among the "Voices of the Past"
Is thine; the "old, familiar face" is gone;
And that "old smile" of pure benignancy,
That won all hearts, Where is it now? 'Tis here;—
It hath not passed away: it lingers still
Upon the page, and lingering glorifies. †

Lamb's was a tenderness that overflowed.
Wealthy was he in riches of the heart;
A mine (of delicate feeling, purest love)
Was his that would have beggared all Peru
To match or equal! Loving, loveable,
And loved by all who graciously had found
Entrance within the circle, famed and rare,
That owned the gentle sway of "gentle Charles,"
And proved the genial warmth of Elia's heart. *

"And did he love the children?" Wondrous well.
"And did they love him, too?" Amazingly.
Instinctively the child will single out
The gentle heart; the loadstone not more sure
To draw the needle than a child is drawn
By gentleness; and Elia's heart was so / ‡

† The peculiar sweetness of Lamb's "habitual smile" has been often dwelt upon by those who knew him. It is described as the most winsome that ever lit up human face. And for myself, I can scarcely read any one of his inimitable "Essays," without imagining a smile, though often a sad one, playing on the face of the writer, as he wrote.

* In the last decade of Lamb's life, "to be a *protégé* of his was a passport into all literary society." "His kindness ennobled all sects, all parties, all classes, while his genius shed ever new and pleasant lights on daily life."

‡ Lamb was always in great favour with the young. Who has catered for them better than he, in his bewitching "Tales from Shakespeare?" In his latter years, the delightful, genial old man (but who can ever think of *him* as old?) would often take his friends' children out for pleasant walks, in town or country.

How sweet it is to love and be beloved
Of children, with their pure and virgin hearts
Unwarped as yet by fashion ; incorrupt,
And sweet and whole, as they are kindly made
By Nature ; uninfluenced by the forms,
And thousand artificialities
That mould what now is termed " society ! "
And purer e'en, methinks, than parents' love
Is the fond love for the dear little ones
That's felt by one who ne'er himself hath proved
A father's joy. To feel their fragrant breath,
In kisses raining on your cheek, your lips ;
To feel about your neck their clinging arms ;
To know you have their love is blessedness,
And holier bliss, methinks, than waits upon
The fondest father. And such happiness
Was Elia's. " Ah, then he never married ? "
" With all his fondness, then, he never loved ? "
Nay, rather ask me if he ever lived !
For whoso lives *must* love, or soon, or late—
The witty Frenchman's epigram reads true ! *
Lamb never married, but he deeply loved ;
And some who strongly love must love but once !
The common Heart may love indifferently,
And straightway shape itself to any mould ;
But some, with heart fine-balanced, pure and whole,
Once deeply wedded to as pure a soul,
Shall scarcely brook a second even in thought !

* " *Quel que tu sois : voici ton maître !
Il l'est, le fait, ou le doit être !* "

Adapted from the Greek and inscribed on a statue of Cupid.

'Twas thus with gentle Elia. And full oft,
 On the broad highway of our common life,
 There shall be met with who have felt too keen
 The like experience—men who've truly loved
 Once, and once only, deeply, fiercely loved,
 With passion all-absorbing, fathomless ;
 Nor ever ending on this earth at all—
 A yearning still unsatisfied below,
 That does not lessen, but increases more,
 For some sweet angel who has gone before ;
 To whom all music that is sad shall seem
 A thousand " changes " on one " Might have been ! "
 If thou art such, O Reader, then remain
 In silence such ; nor seek to tell thy pain.
 Full many a *covered* wound thy brothers bear
 In manly silence, shedding no weak tear.
 All men were born to suffer, thou must know ;
 And there are many still that suffer *so*.
 Let not the vulgar souls who would delight
 To see a bleeding heart behold the sight !
 Be this thy course, be thine the manly part,
 To wear a smile, though with a breaking heart !

Such lesson from our Elia's life we learn,
 And hence its pathos ; hence it is we yearn
 With more than brother's fondness—tenderer love
 Than brother's yet, towards him who ever strove,
 In silent manliness, to play his part :
 Cheerful without, *within* a breaking heart !



Lines on Jean Paul Frederick Richter.

(COMMONLY CALLED "JEAN PAUL.")

RICHTER we do not call thee, but "Jean Paul!"

The surname were too distant. Who reads thee

Will take thee to his bosom as a friend ;
And speak and think of thee with tenderness,
And love ineffable. His new-made bride,
If she perchance shall hear him, shall look up,
And ask her husband if she heard aright—
If 'twas a *woman* that he spoke of then ?
And being reassured shall wonder still,
And still, at her fond husband's streaming eyes !—
" And is it possible that *any* man
Can love another *man* so much as this ?"
Thus, pouting, to her pretty self she puts
A question that she would not dare to ask
Her doting husband !

Such our love for thee,
O Richter, who have read thy tender page !
Gentle and strong wert thou : a heart was thine
That to its inmost depths was ever stirred,

If other hearts had suffered. Tender words
Came forth, and healing balm thou wouldst apply
With thy own loving hands.

The heavy weight

And "burthen of the mystery," though it lay
Upon thy spirit, did not overcast
With any depth of shadow thy sweet life ;
And even woke within thee warmer love
For all thy fellows. O thrice Noble One !
O German Richter, if I told the love
That ever wells within me when thy name
Is writ or spoken, some, methinks, would say :
" He does exaggerate, affect, put on !"
But I would scorn such " acting ;" and, in truth,
" Jean Paul " 's a name engraven on my heart.
Still must I speak of him as of a bride !
And had he not the tenderness, and more,
Of the most tender woman—a fond heart
As pure, and delicate, and finely strung
As harp Æolian, played on by the winds ?

Thou learnèd Youth ! that dost aspire, and yet
Findst that the path to Fame is all too steep,
And difficult ; and everywhere beset
With cruel thorns, and spines full sharp that cut
Into thy tender flesh—whose bleeding heart
Would fain cry out against the "inhuman dearth"
Of sympathy with high and noble aims,
In this cold world, Read thou the Poet's page !
Mark how "a youth sublime" can nourished be
In the keen air and cold of poverty !

Learn thou, from noble Richter's chequered life,
A lesson of sweet patience, holy calm,
And fortitude to BEAR ! Try thou, with him,
To give a welcome even to Penury,
And find a blessing in what seems a curse !
For, add to th' flame that burns in youthful breasts
The oil of riches, and full oft you find
The ashes only of the phoenix left !*

But thou, O Richter, thou, pressed on all sides
By hunger, and the crowd of ills that come
In Penury's sad train, didst still preserve
Firm independence, gentleness of heart,
Love for thy kind, and wondrous purity
In thought and deed—didst nourish still,
Whilst quaffing at the "Hunger Fount," thy heart
With noble aspirations towards the Good,
The Beautiful, the True, and with a love
All but divine for all of human kind !

The lowest hut, and highest tower of kings,
By thee were entered "with an equal step,"†
In whom the native dignity of Man
Was nobly shown—a lesson to us all.

What *is* this proud nobility of rank ?
Ofttimes an accident of birth—no more.
And what the thousand pomps and shows of earth ?
There are who look beyond them—they whose eyes,
Purged from all films, can these thick, mundane mists
Pierce through, and see things as they truly are.

* See Jean Paul's "Wahrheit aus mein Leben."

† *Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede.*—HOR.

Thrice happy they, and better for their kind
 If, with this penetration, they combine
 A loving, fond, and gentle heart that melts
 With deep-felt pity at the spectacle
 Of this strange world, where man contends with man
 So fiercely that e'en in the paths of trade,
 Where quiet should be, 'tis "a battle scene!"
 Indeed, far less he fights that beareth arms,
 And follows beat of drum, than he who goes
 All weaponless, save but his wits, to mart!

Let not the man who hath not borne a part
 In Life's great battle e'er presume to preach
 His empty homilies to the list'ning crowd.
 But let *his* words be valued who hath come
 Fresh from the strife, and who hath still preserved
 His love for human-kind—a generous heart
 That feels the pity of the pressing scene,
 Where some of hard necessity *must* fall,
 Crushed by the crowd, their strength availing not.

With his keen eye the Poet sees it all :
 Sublime upon the heights he stands, surveys
 The various, shifting scene, and melts at heart
 With tender pity, love unspeakable,
 As did the Christ of old, when he cried out :
 "Forgive them, for they know not what they do!"
 Such eye was thine, O Richter, such thy heart,
 Such thy soft tender pity, and thy love
 For poor humanity; whose thousand faults
 And foibles thou, when in a mood less grave

Couldst make us laugh at—laugh at our own selves
Whene'er we saw the portrait ! Such thy power,
O noble Poet ! And thy maxim this,
That no man who loves not his fellow-man,
And can at times the tear of pity shed,
Shall laugh at man—he were unworthy else.

And ah, how much to smile at then, as now ;
And now, as then. How little Man hath changed
Through the long centuries, stretching far and far
Into remotest days, however outwardly
Time may have wrought upon him ! We have still
On Life's wide stage the self-same characters ;
"The old, old Story's " played before us yet.
Call you "Sir Snob " an upstart ? I believe
His family most ancient ; it has lived,
Ay, and has flourished, many thousand years !
Alas ! for all this aping—all these airs
Society puts on, so called " polite !"
They do but make a comedy for him
Whose philosophic eye can pierce beyond
The *forms* of things, and all this empty show—
A season-ticket to the pantomime,
It is to him—a long, long pantomime,
But ah, too brief a season, for the play
Will still go on when he is called away !

Such to thine eyes, methinks, appeared the world,
O Richter, this poor, human world, that bows
Its foolish head to Fashion, and I know not what !—
That bows its head to Mammon ! Thou and I,

O Reader, spite of our own better thoughts,
Are oft of those who value human-kind,
Not for their virtues, or their deeds of love,
But for their deeds on parchment, and the gold
That lies within their money-chests at home,
Or at their banker's. My good neighbour, he,
Forsooth, although abounding in good works,
Does not abound in riches ; and I think
He ought to stand behind *me*, who am worth
A trifle more, in land or gold ; and I,
In turn, must stand behind another man,
Who lately having had, *upon the turf*,
A run of luck, has thereby won the right
To stand before me—such the social rule !
It is a hateful rule, and yet 'tis one
Ten thousand follow, and ten thousand more !

I do but note a few of England's faults.
Of Richter Germany had need, and still
Has need of writers such as he ; but yet
Our England has, methinks, still greater need.
Would we had other Richters at this day,
To *warm* the heart of England, to exalt
The Good and True, and to put down the False !
Would we could " drum out " all the drones that prey
Upon the honest and industrious,
Including amongst these the men who live
By games of hazard, and " the betting-ring."
(Those milder drones I do not mention here,
Of far less harm unto the commonwealth,

Who spend their lives in "strenuous idleness.")
Drinking and Gambling, these are the *twin curse*
Of England ! O for *fifty* Richters' power !
That I might lift a voice that should be heard
Far through this land, the land that I do love
Above all lands—the country of my heart—
Whose people are my brothers or my sisters all,
With whom I fain would *rise* ; but still should fall
If, by some evil chance in evil hour,
My native England e'er should lose the power,
And giant strength, the Giant to sustain
Whose lusty arms across the Western main
Are far out-stretched, and to the East again ;
While to remotest South, and furthest North,
The countless ships are bound that issue forth
From her safe harbours ! "Queen of all the Seas"
Is this proud England, still ; and if it please
Kind Heaven to send her present grace, she may
Retain her empire to a distant day.
Let not those underminers now at work
In the Ship's timbers, sapping them—that lurk
Unseen, like insects, rest her hulk within ;
But let us each assist to clear the vermin !

The danger now that threatens England most
Comes from within herself ! Her rocky coast,
By favouring Nature guarded, and a host
Itself, defies the foolhardy foes that drive
From *that* side. Her own Sons it is that strive
Against her peace and future strength ; that lurk

Unseen, like insects, who, though small, yet work
Her ruin—slowly, yet surely, sap her strength
By underminings, small at first ; at length
The Ship, worm-eaten, will be set aside,
Or rock, a useless hulk, upon the tide !

. The Germans call this great humorist and poet (though he wrote in prose only), "Jean Paul der Einzige," (Jean Paul, the Only One), and properly so, for as a writer he is unique ; and some of his highest flights, such as, for instance, the "Dream of the Dead Christ," in "Siebenkäs," for reach and splendour of imagination, and eloquence of wording, are not surpassed in any language. Not Shakespeare, not Milton, not Dante, goes beyond "Jean Paul" when he is at his best. Yet he is far too peculiar, too difficult and intricate, to be widely read in these hasty, impatient days. But all who regard the Germans as "wholly a phlegmatic people," would read Richter with the deepest interest, than whom few less phlegmatic writers ever put pen on paper. Yet he is as manly as he is tender ; and the virile character of the man, and the masculine character of his intellect, added to his tenderness, ought to recommend him equally to a Tyndallian or a Tennysonian.





The Mariners of England.

[WRITTEN WITH REFERENCE TO MR. PLIMSOLL'S
NOBLE EFFORTS IN THEIR BEHALF.]

I'LL tell thee, Friend, whence England's *greatness*
sprang :

It was *her hardy sons who plough the main*
That made her what she is ; and her proud name
Among the nations of the world was won
By those brave men—our noblest and our best—
Who daily risk their lives on treacherous seas !
All weathers, fair or foul, they dare the deep
So full of peril, and whose surging waves,
When angered by the winds, will toss the foam
A mountain-height, and crush the strongest bark.
And how much more those *floating sepulchres*
Of wood that selfish men too often launch,
And call—but miscall—ships ! Oh ! murderers they,
Of the worst form and character. *Themselves*
They cannot trust within these cranky hulls ;
But they can send, forsooth, to watery graves,
Without remorse or shame, the honest “tar,”
On whose safe-faring hangs the happiness

Of wife and child, or children ; haply, too,
A father, or a mother ; who shall tell
How much depends upon a single life ?
And shall they perish so—these men, who are
The *salt* of England—shall they perish so ?
Brave Mariners of Britain ! I am free
To tell you, here, that these things shall not be !
Plimsoll has said it, your Great Friend is he,
With voice of thunder : These things shall not be !
England has said it : In this country free,
It were a shame ; but these things shall not be !

How much do they forego, these hardy men :
To them denied the comforts of the hearth ;
To them unknown, except at intervals
Of months or years, too often years—long years,
The placid joys of home ; but not unfelt
The longing and the yearning of the heart
For what it loves and lives for. I could weep
At the mere sight of sailor in the street,
“Steering” his way amid the busy throng ;
So much my thought is of the thing he dares,
And patiently endures. On Arctic seas,
I see him boldly drive, ’mid snow and ice,
His creaking vessel toward the frozen pole.
Beneath the scorching suns of tropic climes
Again I see him, panting in the heat,
Still at his post—his duty, how sublime !
But how, when storms arise !—when the frail bark,
As though ’twere paper-built, is beaten and blown,
And holds its “ life ” at mercy of the waves :

How fares the sailor *then* ! Dost thou not dread
The thunder, when it echoes through the hills,
'Mid pitchy darkness ; or when th' lightning's glare
Lights up the landscape with the light of day ?
How fares the sailor *then* ! All this, and more,
He dares, and suffers patiently. In this
There is an abnegation of himself
That makes the sailor's life, to me, sublime ;
And as I think, I shudder. It is time
Our England roused herself ! This hath she done,
Though slowly and at length. The goal is won,
O gallant Plimsoll ! Take thy well-earned ease ;
And spread the joyful news far o'er the seas :
Licence to drown by wholesale from each knave
At last is taken ! Shout it to the wave !
Ye gallant tars of England, cease your fears !
And lift the flag that, for a thousand years,
Hath nobly braved, upon a hundred seas,
The bloody battle and the blustering breeze !





**Lines Addressed to the Right Rev.
the Lord Bishop of ———.**

[ON THE DETRACTION TO WHICH HE HAD BEEN
SUBJECTED.]

HE that doth seek, in this our world below,
To do Christ's work, must bold and fear-
less show—

Against the Powers of Evil fearless *be*,
Whilst striving still. And such we find in thee,
Undaunted ———, whose courageous heart,
And liberal mind, so fit thee for the part
To which by happy chance thou hast been called—
If chance it be ! Well may ye stand appalled,
Ye hollow Hearts, at words so plain as these,
Accustomed long to hear just what you please !
It is the voice of Paul that's heard again ;
Nor heard one whit too loud, although too plain—
Too plainly heard by some ; but who are *they* ?
Men who would go to church as to a play,
To be amused, to criticise, forsooth,—
To act, and see the acting. 'Tis not truth
They go to hear ; they like not him at all

Who speaks the truth. "I don't, and never shall
Like this new Bishop!" you will hear them say.
The Bishop speaks in far too plain a way—
That is the reason. When the church-bells chime,
These dress and go as to a pantomime ;
And being met with truths that don't amuse,
But rather "hit," they chafe within their pews.
You will not find *them* when the Bishop speaks
Next time, among his hearers ; nor for weeks
Will they forget the bitter pill he gave,
Although in kindness. Doctors that would save
From bodily pain don't ask you if you'll take
Something that's pleasant ; for your dear health's sake,
You haste to do their bidding. So, would you
Be cured of moral ills—and there are few
But suffer so—'tis fitting you should give
To the physician who would have you live
The same attention you your surgeon gave,
When he but sought a single limb to save.


Religion is *not* this : "Good morning, Jonès.
This brand-new Bishop, he would rouse the stones,
I really think so ; don't you think the same ?"
"Well no, friend Brown, I thought him rather lame
In some of his conclusions, and I know
That Smith here thinks the same, who sat below."
"Good morning, sir ; the sermon's rather long."
"*That* you may say ; and also much too strong."
"Good morning, love ; and who has preached to-day ?"
"The Bishop, pa ; and just in the old way !"

And must the Bishop preach to such as these
 A sermon "short and sweet"—just what they please?
That were a function too ignoble far.
 The Bishop's duty is to preach, and dare
 To speak the truth, and tell us what we are,
 And what we should be. The good Doctor he,
 Whom, if we knew it, we have need to see,
 And hear; who gives us not our choice
 Of medicines, nor asks us if 'tis nice,
 Or sweet to take, but tells us what we *need*!
 Thine office is most holy; may'st thou speed
 Full well, O ———! may God grant thee powers,
 And faculties to cope, in darkest hours,
 With those fierce monsters in this world of ours,
 Who tear thy people as the wolves the flock!
 Firm be thy footing still, as on a rock,
 To fight with boldness in the cause of Good!
 Deem not thy acts mistaken; understood
 Art thou too well by them who would decry
 Thee and thy deeds. Alas, thou wouldst deny
 These people their indulgences, their ease—
 Thine actions and thy sermons do not please—
 How should they! Thou dost talk too much,
 Too long, too loud for these, and for *all such*!
 But not too long, too loud for One above,
 Who smiles upon thee with a smile of love,
 Well pleased, approving that which thou hast done.
 Thus strengthened and approved, do thou go on,
 O ———, fearless, as thou hast begun!



Lines

on Receiving, from a Friend, a Fragment of
a Tree overhanging the Grave
(NEAR MELBOURNE)
of Burke and Wills, the Australian Explorers.

UR *Peaceful Heroes* have I always loved ;
A strong aversion hath me ever moved,
From deeds of blood. The bold Explorer,
he

Who braves the dangers of the Arctic sea,
Or dares the perils of the desert sands—
All who on distant seas, or distant lands,
Have risked their lives, and there, far off, have died
In surging seas, or on savannas wide—
These are my Heroes ; and our *Livingstone*
Is dearer far, to me, than *Wellington*.

Judge then my feelings, Friend, when in my hands
You placed this sacred leaf from southern lands,
Plucked from the tree that overshades the Grave
Of Burke and Wills, those Peaceful Heroes, brave !
Few heroes hath the Southern Land as yet ;

But these brave souls she will not soon forget.
The stuff were they of which *our* heroes are ;
And greater seem than if they'd died in war,
'Mid beat of drums and the loud cannon's roar.

With dauntless hearts they started to explore
The southern wilds, where *none had passed before*—
A land of perils, all uncertain, strange ;
A climate often fierce, and full of change ;—
Mountains and forests, and wide sandy plains ;
Suns often scorching, and oft drenching rains ;—
Columns of sand, that darken all the air ;
(Sudden and strange the many changes there ;)
Hot, parching winds, that choke the very breath,
And blast all lower life, and threaten death
To highest : such the dangers that are found
In that wild land, where wonders still abound.
Huge trees are there, that yet afford no shade ;
And eggs by platypus and mole are laid !
There, half-foot long, the maggots often crawl ;
A thousand lovely flowers are scentless, all.
The cuckoo's cry the sleeper will awake,
At dead of night ; the owl's screech at daybreak.
Swans there are black, and eagles often white ;
And "quadrupeds," so called, are bipeds quite.
There birds grind knives, crack whips, and ring the bells,
To judge by hearing, as the traveller tells.
And strangest sound of all, one bird, the jay,
Lifts up a voice that's like a donkey's bray !
All this one sees and hears, while on his way

Through that most wild and wondrous Southern Land.
Nor want there yet, at times, of pictures grand,
And gorgeous pageants. Oft the sun will rise
In splendour quite unknown to northern eyes,—
Undreamt of, unimagined ; while at night
His setting is magnificent—a sight
To be remembered. There, above the hill,
Hangs the bright orb that grows in glory still ;
Uprise the gorgeous clouds, of every hue,
Shrouding the sun in splendours ever new ;
Blaze the hill-tops with crimson and with gold ;
Bathed in the roseate light, each shepherd's fold,
And hut, shows beautiful ; and all the trees,
And every bush is painted—sights like these
Thou couldst not match on canvas : never man
Shall paint on earth as that “ Old Master ” can !

Such the strange sights, the perils, pictures grand,
That shall be met with in that Southern Land.
Bold must *he* be and hardy that would go
Abroad there, when the fierce Siroccos blow.

But all such perils, and yet more, endured
These Heroes brave, to danger long inured.
They and their comrades boldly dared the worst—
Fiercest extremes of heat, cold, hunger, thirst,
For weary, weary months there, wandering o'er
Those vast wild tracts, until the northern shore
They reached in triumph ! 'Twas a triumph grand,
First to have crossed the great Australian Land—

To have trod, where never yet had trod before,
The white man's foot ! To have heard the roar
Of seas to north and south ; and to have seen,
'Mid thousand perils, all that lies between !

Such the grand triumph of these fearless men.
Sublime their feelings, while they turn again
Their moist eyes southward ; guided by the light
Of sun by day, and of the stars by night ;
And of the moon, that lights the southern sky
With such strange splendour as almost to vie
With northern suns ; while stars shine with a light
To us unknown here in these climes, whose nights
Are dark at best. 'Tis well such heavenly sights
Are there, to cheer the pilgrim on his way,
In that strange land (whose night is like our day !)

Joyful they bend due south, and southward still ;
Homeward they press ; again they climb the hill :
Again they trace the valley ; now the plain ;
Through many a day of weary rack and pain
They cross the desert. Now they reach a lake ;
Eager they seek their burning thirst to slake,
But all is *salt*, and now they perish quite !
So pass the days, and so succeeds the night,
Full of all dangers. Still, they boldly fight
'Gainst each and all ; till, almost in the sight
Of home and friends fainting they fall, subdued
By Hunger and by Thirst—those monsters rude !
Unhappy men ! whose fate was of a sort
With the bold sailor's, that was drowned in port,

In sight of home and kindred, who had been
The wide world round, and every land had seen !

Shine sweetly, Sun, upon the hallowed Grave
Of Burke and Wills, those Peaceful Heroes brave !
And may the lovely tree, whose branches wave,
And softly whisper in the southern air,
When zephyr moves, for ever flourish there,
As now it does, in verdant beauty, rare !
For nobler heroes never perished have
Than *They* who sleep within that Southern Grave !





NON SEMPER SERIA.



"NON SEMPER SERIA."



A Small but Pressing Request.

"Hesperus, hail ! thy twinkling light
Best befriends the lover ;
Whom the sadder moon, for spite,
Gladly would discover !"

GIVE me a little moment,
O lovely maiden dear !
At night, when all are sleeping,
And there is no one near—

A moment in the shadows,
With just a star to peep,
A little moment give me,
O maiden, ere you sleep !

Give me your hand for pressing,
Oh, I will press it light !
Your rosy cheek for kissing,
Oh, I will kiss it right !

A moment in the shadows,
With just a star to peep,
A little moment give me,
O maiden, ere you sleep !



Natural.

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF UHLAND.]



As duly as the night comes on
We meet at yonder stile ;
Nor hath she let me wait alone
For ever such a while :
We're not engaged in any way,
And yet I meet her every day !

I know not how it happens so,
We very often kiss ;
I do not ask her, yes, or no,
Or sue for that or this ;
Only our lips just touch, and then—
It is so sweet, they touch again !

The Zephyr's playing with the Rose,
Nor asks if she loves true ;
The Rose without a question goes
And bathes her in the dew :
So I love her, and she loves me,
Nor dreams of saying, " I love thee ! "



A Little Late.

*Intermissa, Venus, diu,
Rursus bella moves. Parce, precor, precor.—HOR.*

TELL me not that I am "old ;"
Age must not be counted so ;
Never in the winter cold
Would the sweet "Herb True-love" grow !

Thus I plead, but all in vain,
To her, standing at the gate,
For she answers me again :
"You make love a little late !"

"Frost is on your head, and rime,
Care is stamped upon your brow ;
Seems it with you winter-time ;
Why then talk of true-love now ?"

Yet, O Maiden, in my heart
Flowers are blooming—blooming still ;
All is Spring—through every part
Love is running like a rill.

Thousand songs are in my breast ;
Bird-like will they flutter out :
Put thy hand within the nest—
Set them flying all about !

Still I plead my case in vain
To her, standing at the gate—
Still I hear but one refrain :
“ You make love a little late ! ”





Pretty, Witty Marie Fisch.

MAIDEN, that we "Marie" call—
That I knew while yet a child,
Full of glee, with frolic wild—
Now you are a maiden tall,
Pretty, witty Marie Fisch !

Once a little, tricky fairy,
You have grown so tall and lithe ;
Yet your spirits they are blithe—
Blithe as ever, winsome Mary,
Pretty, winsome Marie Fisch !

Pretty, witty Marie Fisch !
In your eyes, where laughter's lurking,
I can see the thought that's working ;
I can tell you what you wish,
Pretty, witty Marie Fisch !

Summer cometh, Marie dear ;
In the woods the birds are singing,
All the summer flowers are springing
In the meadows, far and near,
Pretty, witty Marie Fisch.

And the while blue skies are bending,
With the murmur of the bees
Borne upon the summer breeze,
Unto you these lines I'm sending,
Pretty, witty Marie Fisch.

Ah ! *your* summer too's approaching,
Pretty, witty Marie Fisch,
(In whose eyes one reads your wish),
Woman on maidenhood encroaching,
Pretty, witty Marie Fisch !

When *that* summer time is nearer,
May it be just such as this is,
With as many sweets and kisses
As a woman needs to cheer her—
Such an one as Marie Fisch !





The Wicked Urchin with the Tiny Bow.

Omnia vincit Amor ; et nos cedamus Amori !

Virg.

THOU wicked Urchin with the tiny bow,
What monstrous mischief art thou working
now ?

What havoc dost thou make of human hearts,
Since every man and maid must feel thy darts !
I flee thee ; yet thou catchest me again—
And even now the sweetly-cruel pain
Runs through my members. Still, if I complain,
Redress there's none, and all my pleas are vain.
Pray, Mrs. Venus, will you, please, restrain
That wicked Boy—I mean that *Master Cupid* ?
“Pray hold your tongue,” she says, “and don't be
stupid !”

I plead again ; she tells me to begone,
For what *I* feel, by every mother's son
Is felt the same, and so the world goes on !



"Old Bob" of Kersal.

[" BACHELOR BOB."]

"UNCLE Bob" is a bachelor, hearty and old,
In fact, not so much short of ninety, I am
told ;
And for an old man he's remarkably stirring,
Although to be sure he's a bit hard of hearing.

But his eyesight is good, and he uses it well ;
Not a dog can pass by but Old Robert can tell :
By the moorside you'll meet him, each day, about noon,
With a face that's as full and as round as the moon !

He is hearty at eating, and drinking as well ;
And it taketh no trifle Old Robert to fill :
As a trencherman good he was always put down,
Which no doubt is the cause that so stout he has grown.

By the moor you will meet him, and oft at the inn,
Where Old Bob is imbibing his "toothful" of gin ;
And although when he's going his pace is not slack,
It will take him a precious long time to come back !

Indeed you would laugh if you met him while going,
His pace is so quick, and his look is so knowing :—
It would be a hard thing that Old Robert to stop
When he'd got in his pocket the price of "a drop."

Just a "toothful" of gin, or of whisky, he'll take ;
One drop for himself, and *two* drops for *your* sake—
Just three drops, or so, he can drink without trouble ;
And'll *not* take it hard if you make the three double !

And so hale, sound, and hearty, and jocund is he,
That few can grudge Robert when his "throatle is
dreigh ;"

For a dash of fine humour gleams in the grey eye
Of this Old Bob of Kersal, whenever he's "dry !"

He is fond of the country : with broad bosom bare
On the moor you'll oft meet him, when taking the air ;
And this "ancient" avers that the free wind that blows
O'er the high Moor of Kersal's th' best doctor he
knows !

But *he* never ailed much, and the physic he took,
Whene'er he fell sick, it was brought by the cook !—
And had be but married, some maid of the kitchen,
I'll warrant, of all, he'd have found most bewitching.

But Old Robert affirms that through getting no wife
His life is more happy, being freer from strife.
If you ask why he's single, he tells you : because
He never was partial to *hot tongue and lip-sauce* !

Though they say Robert's doting sometimes when he
talks,
Yet I like well to meet him when going my walks ;
For an old man with cheeks half so ruddy and round
As this Old Bob of Kersal's I never have found !





Under the Lime.

*Tityre, in patula recubans sub tegmine LILIAE,
Silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris avena*

Beneath the shade which linden boughs diffuse,
You, Tityrus, entertain your sylvan muse.

Virgil adapted.

UNDER the Lime, in summer time,
Cosy shelter, and deep the shade ;
Under the Lime, in summer-time,
Age has sat, and Youth has played.

Under the Lime, in summer-time,
Many a friend his old friend meets ;
Under the Lime, in summer-time,
Many a neighbour his neighbour greets.

Under the Lime, in summer-time,
Many a lover courteth his maid ;
Under the Lime, in summer-time,
Many a frolicsome trick is played.

Under the Lime, in summer-time,
Many a man who has travelled wide—
Wide and far, in a foreign clime,
Telleth his tale at eventide.

Under the Lime, in summer-time,
Wise Will laughs, and John the grave;
Under the Lime, in summer-time,
Jolly friends sing they many a stave.

Under the Lime—alas, for time !
Soon must cease the merry uproar ;
For the dear old Lime, come winter-time,
Will naked be as 'twas before.

Still as the Lime, in the vernal prime,
Shall every branch and leaf renew ;
So a higher life in some higher clime
May be reserved for me and you !





My Neighbour the Thrush, and his Wife.

(AN "EARLY BIRD.")

THOUGH the March wind's sounding a churlish
refrain,
As I sit in my cot by "the Moor,"
The wild birds are building, and building
again,—
They're building just over my door.

In the ivy so green (though a wind from the west
Has striven to tear it away)
The *birds of last year* are building their nest—
They're building with sticks and with hay.

In and out do they flit (I can see as I sit)—
Now coming, now flying away—
"And shall you disturb them?" you ask. Not a bit;
Dear Birds! they are welcome as May.

For years have they built in the ivy so green
That hangs o'er my cot to the west;
And many a brave little fledgling I've seen
Start out in the world from its nest!

The King of the Thrushes I call the sweet bird
Whose mate is so busy *up there*;
For though it is early, each morning he's heard,
Whenever the weather is "fair."

Right well do I love him ; and since he hath come
To build here a nest at my door,
Right well does he know that he's more welcome
Than yet any thrush on the moor.

He pipes me a solo in music so sweet,
I listen entranced as he sings ;
I think of a maiden I once used to meet,
And I dream of a thousand things !

Pipe on, feathered Friend, and build a snug nest
In the ivy so green at my door ;
And when the wind comes, as he will, from the west,
I'll pray he may pass by the moor.

Oh sweet is the trust of the babe at the breast,
In the mother that holds him so dear !
And sweet is the trust of my bird, on its nest,
In me, who am standing so near !

But sweeter, O sweeter, the trust of the maid
In the lover who holdeth the key
Of her maidenly heart, and to whom she has said :
As you wish it, I'm willing to be !





Modern Maidens ! Ballroom Beauties !

LOVELY Maids, with golden tresses,
And sweet eyes of heavenly blue ;
Lovely Maids, in splendid dresses,
In every style, of every hue ;

Lovely Maidens, with alluring
Speech and glance, and thousand graces—
How can I, with pen or pencil,
E'er describe your 'witching faces ?

Or the splendour of your jewels,
Gleaming, flashing, in the light
Of the ballroom, whilst you trip it,
Dancing gaily through the night ?

Vainly sought I, 'mid these maidens,
Blonde and brunette, dark and fair,
One that I could love and cherish ;
But such maiden was *not there !*

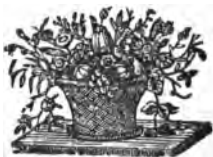
Love, methinks, has left the ballroom,
Glossy silks and glittering gold ;—
Wearied out has sought the country,
Where the hearts are not so cold.

Love has built a rustic cottage,
High upon some breezy mountain,
Or within a depth of wildwood,
Or beside a dimpling fountain.

There in rustic guise he walks,
Deep within the greenwood shade,
Listening to the thousand notes
By the feathered songsters made ;

Or upon the breezy heights,
Wandering free, he loves to hear
Rural sounds of herds and flocks,
Lowling, bleating, far and near.

There I'll wend me, and there haply,
In some far off, shady grove,
I shall meet with some sweet maiden
I can cherish, I can love !





A Wet Weather Rhyme.

WE waited for the spring-time wearily ;
We waited for the coming of the May
With yearning heart, and often did we sigh,
Because the dear Spring lingered by
the way.

No lover waited for his mistress sweet
With deeper longing than for many a day
Was ours whilst waiting the fair Spring to greet,
But still the sweet Spring lingered by the way.

At length she came, belated, and the flowers
Bloomed out anew, and all the earth was gay ;
The bright laburnums flung their golden dowers,
With May-blooms mingled, right across the way.

Blossomed the pear-trees, and the apples all,
And the dear land about was white with flowers ;
The soft winds blew, and snow began to fall,
And drift about—a snow of blossom-showers !

Sweet summer followed, with a promise fair
Of golden sunshine, and delicious hours
Spent in the shade, within the garden there,
Or on the hills, or in the woodland bowers ;

But leaden skies now darken all the days,
Distilling rains that never cease to pour ;
And if we venture on the woodland ways,
Or o'er the meads, we scarce can see a flower !

Alas, for pictures we had fondly drawn
Of pleasant rambles through the pleasant shires,
With doubtful steps we tread the spongy lawn,
And dry our dripping garments at the fires !

In place of rambles through the country-lanes,
We pace the narrow limits of a room
Where scarce a ray of light comes through the panes,
And drag a wretched life amid the gloom.

In lieu of flowers that we had thought to cull
Upon the lofty peaks so far away,
We turn the dry herbs in our closet dull,
And gather grasses that have turned to—*hay* !

And now, whilst leaning on the window-sill,
To gaze upon the meadows and the wood,
We find heaven's windows flung wide open still,
And every runlet roaring in a flood !



In Praise of Horace.

*Et tenuit nostras numerosus Horatius aures,
Dum ferit Ansonid carmina culta lyra.*—OVID. Lib 4, Trist. Eleg 10.



HORACE rare, I do declare
No man, nor yet a woman,
Hath charmed so long both old and young
As thou, the jolly Roman.

In Virgil's verse there is, of course,
A music of the sweetest ;
His life though pure, yet Horace's sure
Was roundest and completest.

Dear Ovid's power to charm an hour
Is very great, I grant it ;
But Flaccus fine is like his wine
Falernian, new decanted !

Though Naso knew the manner true
Of billing and of cooing ;
His life at last in exile passed,
His love was his undoing.*

* Referring to one of the alleged causes of Ovid's banishment.

Though Maro sang the woods among
To charm the very birds ;
And sweeter still, by fount and rill,
Of flocks and lowing herds ;

Yet Horace rare must ever bear
The palm of perfect Roman ;
And the reason here is very clear :
He is so very *human* !

Whose highest themes are splendid dreams
May prove the pride of Rome ;
But he who's view is always true
Is with us here at home !

So Flaccus fine, this verse of mine
I'll fill it with thy praises—
That tookst good note and wisely wrot'st
Of life, in all its phases !





The Good and the Bad Neighbour.

THE good neighbour passes, and bids you
"Good-day !"
The bad one will pass and have nothing to say.

The good neighbour smiles at each one that he meets ;
The bad one is surly, and nobody greets.

The good neighbour sees when you're wanting a lift ;
The bad one helps none : for yourself you must shift.

The good neighbour's willing to lend you a man ;
The bad neighbour leaves you to do as you can.

The good neighbour helps when you're making your hay ;
The bad one, when sent for, is always " away."

The good neighbour comes when your cart's in the rut ;
The bad one is there, but will not stir a foot.

The good neighbour hasteneth a man on his road ;
The bad one does nothing to lighten your load.

The good neighbour asks you to " get up and ride ;"
The bad neighbour's coachman will not turn aside.

The good neighbour's heart always yearns for the poor ;
The bad neighbour scarcely will open his door.

The good neighbour lends what you happen to lack ;
The bad neighbour borrows, and never pays back.

The good neighbour wants you to taste of his wine ;
The bad one has never yet asked you to dine.

The good neighbour always speaks well as he goes ;
The bad one will tell all the bad that he knows.

The good neighbour "does not believe" what he's heard ;
The bad neighbour listens to each "little bird !"

The good neighbour gossiping always eschews ;
The bad one would always be asking the news.

The good neighbour crushes a lie at the first ;
By bad neighbours each bit of scandal is nursed.

The good neighbour loves every child in the place ;
The bad one will very oft give them the chase.

The good neighbour's face it is cheery and kind ;
In the other's you'll nothing but vinegar find !

The good neighbour's face like a love-letter shows ;
The bad neighbour's hated wherever he goes.

God send us good neighbours, I earnestly pray ;
And as for the bad ones : God send them away !



The Ancient Lover.

" — and like the lowly reed, his love
Could drink its nurture from the scantiest rill."

" *There* stopp'd ; his thirst was satisfied
With what this innocent spring supplied." *Wordsworth.*

OFT would he pass the house, and furtively
Glance upward, toward the windows, where
he saw,
Or thought he saw, the Lady of his heart.
And if, by any chance, he caught a glimpse
Even of her *shadow*, he would pass, content.
It was to him a banquet and a feast ;
A fruitful day was *that*—a blessèd day !
A hundred times he went, and only met
Blank windows and bare walls. If once in months
He *saw* his fair Dulcinea, he was rich ;
His hopes bloomed out afresh, and heaven was near !
A lean, lank Figure ! grisly, gaunt and grim
Was he ; most like unto that errant Knight
Of woful face, La Mancha's famous Don—
Cervantes's hero, and as Quixote known.
Some threescore winters, at the least, had cast
Their snows upon a head whose scanty locks
Served as white fringe about a shining crown !

Rueful of face, his deeply-furrowed front
Showed you that Care and he had long been known
One to the other. Almost in the grave
Seemed the old man, or tottering towards its edge.

And in this aged breast had Venus stirred
Her sweetly-cruel fires. Painful is she,
At best—a bitter-sweet ! but in a case
Like this is seems she bitter more than sweet.
“ More sweet than bitter, oft’ner ! ” dost thou say ?
’Tis haply so, and if ’tis so, ’tis well !

I knew him, Friend. A thousand times he came,
And still *would* come, haunting the neighbourhood
Sacred to him, and dear to all his hopes,
In rain or shine. All weathers, fair or foul,
They were the same to him—and he to her
The same. The elements, the very stars,
Each in its course, might fight against his love ;
Yet would he bate no jot—was more devout,
Rather ; and when the storm beat louder still
He clomb the steep hill leading to her home,
Breathless and panting, buttoned to the neck !
The one sly peep he sought which made his *life* ;
The hope of which he lived by more than by
His daily bread ! Oh, wondrous Force of Love !
Oh, marv’lous Power, that dost etherealize
This earthly clay ! Fruition of his hopes
This old man scarcely hoped for ; and his life
Was fed and nourished by th’ mere thought that he
Might haply catch a *glimpse* of her he loved ;

Or hear, perchance, the rustling of her robe !
And have I mock'd him ! Is *our* happiness
So certain in fruition of *our* hopes ?
Hast thou—have I—not found, full many a time,
More pleasure in the *seeking* than when we
Have found the thing we sought ? 'Tis often so.
At many a shrine hast thou not bowed full low ;
And found, at last, thine idol made of clay—
Of grossest clay, that scattered to the winds
Thy sweet illusions ? Was't not even so ?

Oft, on wild moors, in wildest weather, I
Have met this " Passionate Pilgrim " journeying
On to that goal which he shall never reach.
Heaven willed it so. The Lady, young and fair,
In her ripe summer shuns the icy cold
Of white December ! Who amid the snows
Of winter seeks to cull the blooming rose,
He greatly errs : 'tis out of season, quite.

" One morn I miss'd him on th' accustom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his fav'rite tree : "
I ask'd the cause. The Lady, as it proved,
Had suddenly taken ship for distant lands ;
Nor likely to return for many a year.
And he, 'twas thought, had gone to drown his care
By mingling in the vast and surging crowd
Of the great city. Unit there amid
The millions, who would know, or feel, or care
For him, or for his lost or shatter'd hopes ?





IN THE LOWLAND SCOTCH.

To "Henry the Minstrel."

[H—— N——, OF B——, ASTRONOMER, GEOLOGIST,
MUSICIAN AND POET.]

HALE be your heart, braw carl—or *callan* !
Wha wad'na tap the t'ither gallon,
Tae drink tae sic a mon o' talen',
And sic a poet ?
We'll sing a sang shall shake the hallan,
An' fouk shall know it !

Not clever Geordie, wi' his claivers, *
Nor Tam, wi' his politic haivers, †
Though baith o' thir be daintie "shavers,"
Wi' thee'll compare ;
And nane like ye can win the favours
O' lady fair.

Though Geordie seldom wants a word,
And Tam ance amaist lickt a lord ; ‡

* Mr. George Milner, of Manchester.

† Mr. Thos. Newbigging, of Manchester.

‡ Referring to the smart contest in the Rossendale Election (1886) between Mr. Newbigging and the Marquis of Hartington.

Yet honest Hal o' Barrowford—
 Wi' pride we show him—
Is even mair than these adored
 By them that know him !

In troth, my frien', your sonsie visage
Conveys tae ilka ane a presage
O' pleasant things—a welcome message ;
 An' as we leuk,
Love's plainly writ o'er a' the page,
 As in a beuk.

An' when I'm weary o' the warl',
And o' the cankered critic's snarl,
Ye come to me, ye sonsie carl,
 Sae brimming o'er
Wi' glee that I forget my quarr'l,
 An' sough no more.

An' sure the " Cities o' the Plain "
Had been permitted to remain,
An' grow, an' flourish o'er again,
 Gin there had been
Twa-three like you, my gentle swain ;
 Bu' nane were seen !

O' Brun ye're a' the pride, I reckon,
But *certainly* o' your native clachan ;
An' ye're weel-kent, or I'm mistak'n,
 I' the big city,
Where gif ye didna' keep us wauken
 It were a pity.

Whiles spierin' how things gang aboon—
What's happenin' i' the sun and moon,
Or when some comet's comin' roun'—

Ye're unco busy :

Tae glowr sae dree, I'll wad a croon

'Twad turn *me* dizzy !

Whiles rootin' mang a' forms o' life
Wi' which our crust o' earth is rife—
'Tis said that man was *his ain wife*

In days gane by !

Nae doot ye'll enter i' the strife,

An' quick reply.

Wi' ye there's nane can count the stars—
The ruddy ane ye say is Mars—
Or talk about the ichthyosaurs,

And ilka ferlie ;

An' wae betide the wicht that daurs

Tae tilt at Charlie **

At music ye're a cannie chiel ;
An' when we dance ye play sae weel
Ye gar the doited body reel,

Or e'er ye've done ;

An' ilka note that's struck ye *feel*,

As ye gae on.

But when ye quote frae poet Burns,
Toward wham your fond heart ever yearns,

** Charles Darwin.

An' still unceasingly returns
 Wi' unco' zest,
Ye're hee aboon mundane concerns,
 Amang the blest !

And aye ye bear him in your pouch,
And eke within your head, I'll vouch ;
Baith when ye rise, an' when ye couch
 His name returns ;
And ilka ane ye gie a *douche*
 O' " poet Burns ! "

An' wha' wi' aught o' Nature's fire
But maun the noble bard admire ?
Tak' Burns frae oot the tunefu' quire—
 The Muse's son,
The glory o' the British lyre
 Indeed were gone !

Then sing and quote him at your will
Whase melodies the warld fill :
Frae east to west, o'er dale and hill,
 His spirit drives ;
And in man's heart, aye deeper still,
 The poet lives !

An' for yoursel', my sonsie Harry,
Albeit ye roam in regions starry,
An' your big brain sic loads can carry,
 It's aye your *heart*
That warms an' charms, an' mak's us tarry,
 Nor wish to part !



To a Scotch Friend,

ON RECEIVING FROM HIM A NEWLY-PRINTED
VOLUME OF HIS WORKS.

THE bonnie beuk that ye hae wrote
This day I hae been readin' o't;
An' though I aiblins am nae po't,

I will indite
To my auld Frien' a rhymin' note,
This vera night.

Beyond a' doot, ye've got the skill
'To mak' the pen do what ye will;
But I maun vainly dip the quill
Deep in the ink:
My weenie wits hae got a chill,
Or cauld, I think.

'Twas a kin' thocht your beuk to send
On thae "Auld Fouk," my worthy friend;
Sae tak' my thanks withouten end,
Withouten stint;
For mony a cantie hour I'll spend
I' lookin' in't.

In your sojourn beneath the moon—
An' ye hae travell't up an' doon,
An' as ye've passed thro' ilka toon
Seen unco' fouk—
Fu' mony a knave ye maun hae foun',
An' mony a gowk !

But aye ye've kept your heart sae leal,
'An' warm, an' kin', my sonsie chiel,
That ye will never meet the deil,
Bu' gang aboon ;
Tho' when ye gang there's ane will feel
Ye've gaed too soon !—

There's ane I ken, among the ither,
Wha loes ye like a very brither ;
But as I've rin oot a' my tether,
I'll say : fareweel !
Laird keep ye hale, this weary weather,
Frae head to heel !





TRANSLATIONS AND IMITATIONS,
CHIEFLY THE LATTER.



“Wer die Dichtung will verstehen,
Muss in's Land der Dichter geben.”

GOETHE.



Poesy.

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF LUDWIG TIECK.]

MID the rough tossings of Life's boisterous sea,
What wonder if the weak should stranded
be !

And all are weak. Through this wild scene of change,
And chance, and circumstance, when thought doth
range,

Who must not weep ? In vain with sword and shield
Man girds himself, and boldly takes the field ;
His strength avails not in the unequal war—
Fate conquers still !

When thou dost seaward fare,
And storms arise, the magnet will not guide
Thee or thy bark ; and while the wave doth hide
A thousand dangers of the rocky coast,
Thou and thy bark must certainly be lost :
From skill of bravest mariner help is none ;
The ship must perish, and each mother's son
Must perish with her ! Now a friendly light,
From lofty tower to landward, well in sight,
Breaks o'er the deep ; and all the sailors know,
When *that* is seen, which way the ship must go.

And so, for me, thy light, O Poesy !
My feeble bark did guide, when waves were high ;
And still thy light my wandering vessel saves—
By thee oft guided through the angry waves
My bark into the haven's safely borne ;
And rests, at length, within the " Golden Horn ! "





Spring Morning.

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF WILHELM MÜLLER.]

*Et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos,
Nunc frondent sylva, nunc formosissimus annus.*

VIRGIL.

WHO'S tapping at my window pane,
As if he would an entrance gain?
It is the lusty morning breeze
That's playing in the cherry trees!

There's one that near my cottage grows,
And over it a shadow throws;
Its branches, white with blossoms fair,
Are swinging in the morning air.

They beat upon my window pane;
And this is what the Wind says, plain:
"Arise, my merry comrade, now,
And climb up to the mountain-brow!

"Arise, my jolly comrade, dear!
How is 't that you are sleeping here,
When vernal joys are on the wing?
Arise, and greet the lovely spring!

“ The insect’s hum is heard again ;
You ask : ‘ What beats upon the pane ?’
The beetle, drunk with light and air,
Comes buzzing ’gainst the window there ;

“ And the jolly sunshine stealeth in
Among the leaves, without, within ;
It falleth on that couch of thine,
And teaseth thee with shade and shine !

“ The nightingale hath sung so long—
Hath trilled so loud her am’rous song—
That she is hoarse ! ‘ In vain I’ve sung !’
She’s said, and from the tree has sprung.

“ And with the empty twig I came
And beat upon thy window pane.
While every joy is on the wing,
Arise, and greet the glorious Spring !”





Withered flowers.

[AFTER THE SAME.]

THESE withered flowers
My Maiden gave,
Let them be strewn
Upon my grave !

Once-lovely flowers,
Ye pity me,
And seem to say :
We're like to thee.

Once-lovely flowers,
Now wet and pale ;
Though tears, alas,
May not avail !

No idle tears
Shall e'er restore
A love that's dead
For evermore !

Nor idle tears
Shall they make grow
The lovely blooms
All withered now !

Sweet Spring shall come,
Cold Winter go ;
Yet not a flower
Shall ever know ;

While withered blooms,
My maiden gave,
Are lying still
Upon my grave.

But if she pass
By yonder hill ;
And weeping, say :
" He loved me well."

Ah, then, ye flowers,
Bloom out again ;
And gaily deck
Both hill and plain !





A Dream-Picture.

[FROM THE GERMAN OF HEINRICH HEINE.]

WHAT storm is raging in my blood?
Why flows it in a foaming flood?
My heart is leaping in my breast :
Why this wild tumult and unrest ?

My blood is raging like the sea
Because a dream hath come to me :
The Son of Night without did stand,
And beckon me with ghostly hand.

He led me to a chamber tall
Where torch and taper-light did fall,
And music mingled with the feast :
I entered in with panting breast !

A marriage-feast it was, and high
The sounds of song and revelry ;
I looked and saw, I turned aside :
Alas, my own love was the bride !

The bride she was, but, strange to see,
The groom was all unknown to me :
Behind the bridal-chair I stood,
An ice-stream chasing through my blood !

Then music rose, but I stood still ;
Their joy with grief my heart did fill :
No happier bride in all the land ;
Her husband fondly pressed her hand,

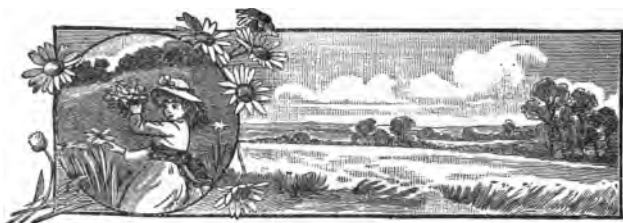
Then took a cup and poured the wine,
And, smiling, pledged that maid of mine ;
While she, in turn, did sweetly thank :
My own red blood it was they drank !

A ruddy apple took the bride,
And gave the husband at her side,
Who with a knife the fruit did share :
My red heart fed the bridal pair !

The bride and bridegroom ogled long,
Till round her form his arms he flung,
And kissed her on her cheek so red :
I felt the kiss of one that's dead !

And all the while no words would come ;
I strove to speak, but still was dumb ;
Then music rose, the bridal twain
Led on the dancing once again.

And as I stood like one entranced,
The dancers wild and wilder danced ;
The bridegroom whispered to the bride,
Who blushed, but did not turn aside—
When I awoke.



Lines Addressed to a Beautiful Young Lady.

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF NICOLAUS LENAU.]

*O formose puer ! nimium ne crede colori :
Alba ligustra cadunt, vaccinia nigra leguntur.*—VIRGIL.

LIKE the red rose in thy hair,
Swiftly hast thou come to bloom,
Lovely Maiden, ah beware,
Lest thy beauty die as soon !

Not for long upon this earth
Shall the life of beauty last—
Brief, ah brief, and small its worth ;
Yet one solace still thou hast :—

If to perish be the doom
Of all beauty here below,
Souls shall live, and hearts shall bloom,
If all else do perish so !

Therefore, in thy autumn days,
When the leaves are brown and sere,
And when none thy beauty praise,
Life shall still be pleasant here,

If thy heart, like some sweet flower,
 Thou wilt watch with tender care,
 Joy shall scatter, every hour,
 Thousand blossoms rich and rare.

If no longer thou canst wear
 (Since thy cheeks have pallid grown)
 Lovely roses in thy hair,
 From the garden freshly blown,

Thou shalt wear them in thy heart—
 All the charm shalt still possess,
 And the feeling still impart,
 Of a perfect loveliness !





The Old Linden Tree.*

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF LOUIS VON ARENTSCHILD.]

OH, how I love the rare, old Linden tree,
Under whose shadow when a child I
played—

Where all my sweetest dreams have come to me,
And under which, at last, I would be laid !

Mute witness was it of a golden time ;
Oft, underneath its spreading branches there
I've heard full many a tale, in prose or rhyme,
By dear, old Grandam told, with talent rare.

And with my heart's best friend, on sunny days
Of sunny youth, have I its shadow sought
A hundred times : protected from the blaze
Of midday sun, how often have we thought

Upon the future, and our life to be ;
Nor did one cloud obscure the prospect fair :
Each would be hero—one upon the sea
A captain bold—the other *militaire* !

* The Lime, *Tilia Europæa*,

Nor ever yet shall I forget the day—
The very last I spent with my fond love,
Whose image in my heart, though far away,
I still have borne, and must, where'er I rove !

In far-off lands long absent, now I come
In purse no longer poor, to —— shore.
With yearning heart I seek my village home,
To find that all I loved are now—no more !

My faithful friend in arms has fought and died ;
The grave is green where dear old grandam sleeps ;
And when I trembling ask for my fond bride,
She whom I ask in silence only weeps !

Of all I loved remains the Linden tree,
Under whose shadow when a child I played—
Where all my sweetest dreams have come to me,
And under which, at last, I would be laid !





Remorseful Moments.

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF MORITZ GRAF STRACHWITZ.]

“**T**HY kiss is burning hot, my love,
And eager thy embrace—
Thine eyes shine with the light of love,
But still upon thy face,”

“Now that I look, I plainly see
A shadow, dark and deep ;—
Prithee, my love, unfold to me,
Nor longer from me keep”

“The secret grief that frets thee so,—
Why heaves the heartfelt sigh ?
Why does the shadow deeper grow,
And tears bedim thine eye ?”

“As mountain-stream the valley loves,
So, dearest, love I thee !
As breakers love the wild sea-coves,
So deep my love for thee !”

“ As dear to me as light art thou ;
And more yet, even more !
Nay, frown not love, but tell me now
What grieveth thee so sore !”

Thine eye is bright, thy heart is warm ;
On earth was never seen
A sweeter maid ; no fairer form
Hath tripped along the green.

Then listen, love, and I will tell
What 'tis that grieves me so :
A blue-eyed Maid lived on a hill—
’Tis many years ago.

I loved her as the stream the vale,
As breakers love the shore,
As fairies love the moonlit dale ;
And more yet, even more !

As dear to me as the bright sun,
This Maid upon the hill ;
And yet she was by me undone,
For I was faithless still !

This brings the shadow thou hast seen,
That sits upon my brow ;
Nor shall that shadow pass, I ween,
But ever deeper grow.

Thou lov'st me as I loved that Maid,
Who lived upon the hill ;—
She in her silent grave is laid,
And this is Heaven's will,

That I who loved, and yet could kill,
Should in my turn be loved ;—
And hated, hated, hated still
By thee, my own beloved !





Hopeless Grief.

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF F. BRAUN.]

THE glorious sun beams forth again
Weeps every herb upon the plain
For very joy, in dewdrops bright—
I weep for sorrow, day and night !

The roses all are budding now,
The sweet birds sing on every bough,
Rejoicing that the winter's o'er—
I weep for sorrow evermore !

Trees clothe themselves with verdure new—
Their blood through all their veins renew,
The flower-snows fall on every side—
For me, my tears are never dried !

Joy bloometh out o'er hill and plain ;
Yet must I cease not to complain—
Nor tree, nor flower, nor sweet sunshine
Can ever soothe this grief of mine !



The Poet's World.

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF ADOLF STÖBER.]

THE Monarch raised aloft his hand,
And swung his sceptre wide ;
“ I am the King of all the Land,
And all the Sea beside !”

He proudly said : “ On my domains
The sun doth never set ;
If dark the north, on southern plains
My sun is shining yet !”

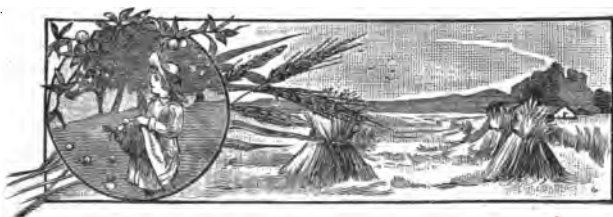
For me, thou seest *I* wear no crown
Of gold and precious stones ;
Of all the land I scarcely own
Six feet, to lay my bones !

And yet a *kingdom* I command ;
It blooms within my heart :
In this wide world no fairer land
Is found in any part.

There cheers me all the livelong day,
And gilds my dreams at night,
And shineth ever on my way,
A pure and heavenly light.

So, like the monarch, I can say :
The sun doth never set
On *my* domains ; his kindly ray
For me is shining yet.





Mary the Reaper.

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF LUDWIG UHLAND.]

POOOR Mary, the Reaper, loved dearly the Son
of the Farmer ;
While he, in his turn, had been won by the
beauty of Mary.

But the flourishing Farmer, though rich, still sought to
be richer ;

Said Henry should marry a fortune, and sternly forbade
him

To speak to poor Mary, though she was the pride of
the village.

It chanced that the Farmer was walking abroad in the
morning

So early he thought not to find in the field the earliest
reaper ;

But the earliest reaper was there, and that reaper was
Mary !

Then touched by her diligence, and eke by her beauty
it might be,

The Farmer, while kind in his manner, thus spoke to
the maiden :

“Ah Mary, good morning ! what up, and reaping,
thus early !

No maid that was lovelorn found I so diligent ever ;
And shame it would be if I gave you no compensation.
If the field here before us, in three full days from the
present,
Is reaped by your diligent hands, my son he shall wed
you.”

So spake the Farmer to Mary, the beautiful Reaper,
Whose heart, while he spake, was beating with livelier
pulses ;

A force that was new, that was strong, was stirring
within her ;

A strength that never before she had felt did she feel
now,

While swinging the scythe ; at each stroke the sheaves*
they were falling.

Hot noon has arrived, and the reapers, all tired, have
departed ;

They have drunk at the well, and now they all sleep in
the shadows.

Blazeth the sun in the heavens, the sultry fields are
forsaken ;

Nothing is heard but humming of bees, and the sound
of the sickle

Of Mary, the Reaper, who reapeth alone in the
meadows.

* That is to say, as much corn as would make a sheaf.

Low in the western sky the sun, at length, has
descended ;
The bells of the village are heard, and the voices of
neighbours,
Calling to Mary, the Reaper, to rest from her labours.
Every reaper has gone—the herd, and also the herds-
man,
Have long since passed through the fields, on their
way to the farmstead ;
Still the beautiful Reaper reapeth alone in the
meadows.

Falleth the evening dew—the moon and the stars
they are shining ;
Now smelleth the corn right pleasant, while the sweet
Philomela
Is heard from a copse in the distance : the diligent
maiden
Stays not a moment to listen, nor rests from her
labours :
Under the moon, in the silence, still she plieth the
sickle.

And so from evening till morning, from morning till
evening,
Still nourished by Love and by Hope, the maiden she
reapeth,—
Reapeth she ever, nor rests, till at length, on the third
day,
The great sun riseth again, and looketh down upon
Mary—

On Mary, the love-lorn, whom Love has sustained in
her labours ;
Though bitterly weepeth she now that her task is completed.

“ Ah Mary, good morning ! most wonderful diligence,
surely !
Why the meadow is reaped ! Your work shall be richly
rewarded,
But not with a wedding ; my jesting was taken in
earnest :
How foolishly credulous ever are maids that are
lovelorn ! ”

So speaks the Farmer, and goeth his ways ; while the
poor Mary,
Cruelly crushed, and bleeding within, her strength all
departing,
Speechless, unconscious, helpless, sinks in the midst of
the cornfield ;
And there she was found by the reapers who came to
the harvest !

Though bruised and broken in heart, the maiden still
lived in the village
For years ; was pitied by all, and beloved ; and haply
she tasted
One drop of Life's honey, ere she had completed Life's
journey !
By the meadows she sleeps, where the golden corn it
is waving ;

And reapers shall come to the harvest, and think of
poor Mary—

Shall think, with a tear, of the gentle and beautiful
Reaper—

Of Mary, the lovelorn, of Mary the wonderful maiden,
Whom Love had made strong, to surpass e'en the
strongest of Reapers !

(But the strongest of Reapers is Death, who ne'er from
his labours

Resteth a moment ; even now with the scythe he is
busy !)





The Winter Song of the Herdboy.

[FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND.]

WINTER, cruel Winter,
How narrow the world is now !
Thou driv'st us all to the valleys,
And the crowded huts, I trow.

And if I chance to wander
To where my true love bides,
She's never at her window,
But in the house she hides.

Then, if I muster courage
To enter her father's house,
She sits beside her mother,
As quiet as any mouse !

O Summer, lovely Summer,
How wide the world is then !
For the higher we mount, and the higher
The prospect of hill and plain.

And there, on the mountain-summit,
I shout to my maiden free ;
And though sweet Echo answers,
None heareth it only she.

Then her rosy cheek I kiss it,
On the mountain-top so green,
And we look far over the landscape,
And yet we are never seen !





By-Gones.

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF JOSEPH FREIHERR VON
EICHENDORF.]

AH ! where is now the dear old tree
That stood so broad and high,
Upon whose branches I have swung,
On many a day gone by—

Upon whose boughs, when white with bloom,
I've swung in merry glee ?
This chestnut high that standeth by,
The same it cannot be !

Nor can this be the lovely wood
In which I've heard the trees
Rustling so sweet and pleasantly,
In the soft evening breeze,

When from my love returning late,
On many a summer night,
I made a rhyme, or sung a song,
Of pleasure and delight.

Nor yet is this the vale so green
In which, on summer days,
Full oft I've seen the gentle deer,
That timidly did graze ;

And where as oft I met my Maid
Who there awaited me :
Oh, this is not the valley—no,
The same it cannot be !

* * * * *

The chestnut high that standeth by,
It is the very tree
On which, so many years ago,
You swung in childish glee.

The grove on which e'en now you look,
It is the very same
Through which, returning from your love,
A thousand times you came.

Nor yet is the sweet valley changed
In which, on summer days,
You often saw the gentle deer
That timidly did graze ;

And where as oft you met the Maid
Whose heart was all your own :
'Tis that the world is ever young,
And *you* have *older* grown !



The Lovesick Maiden.

[IN IMITATION OF ADELBERT VON CHAMISSO.]

WELL, now I've seen young Charlie,
I really think I'm blind ;
For nothing else but Charlie
Can occupy my mind ;
And whichever way I look,
Young Charlie still I find !
His figure stalks before me,
As in a waking dream,
The whole day, and at night will
More clear the picture seem.
There's nothing now I care for,
Since Charlie's gone away ;
Nor play I with my sisters,
With whom I used to play.
In anything around me
I can no longer find
The least delight ; and that's why
I think that I am blind !
So said, or sang, the Maiden
When Charlie was away ;
But back, full soon, came Charlie,
And found the Maiden gay ;
And she, and her young Charlie,
They fixed the wedding day !



The Flower's Complaint.

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF FRIEDRICH FÖRSTER.]

BY the side of a brook, in a wood so fresh and green,
There grew as sweet a Flower as ever yet was seen ;

This Flower in the mirror of the streamlet's glassy wave

When she saw her pretty face, she thus began to rave :
" Ah, what avails my beauty, when nobody is by ?
There's no pleasure in my life, and far rather I would die ! "

Then out-spake the blue Heaven, saying : " Why do you complain ?

For sun, and moon, and stars, don't I bring them round again ?

In the face of the free Heaven, how can you thus complain ? "

When unto the blue Heaven the Flower replied again :
" I love the blessed stars, when the glorious sun hath gone,

And the splendour of the heavens, but still I feel *alone* ! "

Then came a gallant Youth, and he spake so bold and free,

Saying: "Now, my pretty Flower! d'ye wish to go
with me?"

Ah, then the little Flower, she blushed, and whispered low:

"With you, my gallant Youth, and right willingly
I'll go;

For though the earth be lovely, when the glorious sun
doth rise,

Without *you* it were too lonely, and e'en in paradise!"





Into the Still Night, Come !

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF ROBERT REINICK.]

INTO the still night, come !
Hasten, O Maiden, haste !
Come to this yearning breast ;
Long hath the sun to rest
Sunk in the golden west :
Oh, come, my darling, come !
For only Love doth roam.

Maiden, why linger at home,
When stars are shining bright,
And Cynthia sheds her light,
So soft o'er valley and height ?
Oh, come, my darling, come !
For only Love doth roam.

Into the still night, come !
Fear not the glimmering light
Of moon, on flowers so white,—
Fear not the pale moon-light :
Oh, come, my darling, come !
For only Love doth roam.

Now stand I here alone,
While all around do sleep ;—
Weepers have ceased to weep,
Wrapped in their slumbers deep :
Oh, come, my darling, come !
For only Love doth roam.

Into the still night, come !
Only the nightingale,
Full of his am'rous tale,
Sings in the distant vale :
Oh, come, my darling, come !
For only Love doth roam.






As it often happens.

[AFTER THE GERMAN OF GEIBEL.]

Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape
calumny.—*Shakespeare.*

 H, basely-lying tongues ! Oh, slanderous
tongues,
That will not rest, but must for ever wag,
Spread poison wide, and do their wicked work !
They said to Her : " Dear Maid, he loves thee not ;
But merely plays with thee : thou art his toy ! "

Then bowed she her fair head, and down her cheeks,
All blanched and pale, streamed the hot, scalding tears.
Oh, *if* she had thought ; *if* she had known !
Then, when her lover came, and saw distrust
And gloomy doubt where never yet, till now,
Distrust or doubt had been—in her blue eyes,
That looked *accusingly*—his proud pulse rose
In scorn. Yet would he nothing show ; disdain
Forbade ! He sang, played, drank, and laughed aloud ;
Then sought his room, and *all night long he wept !*

Soon whispered a good angel in her ear :
" He still is true ; give him thy hand, oh, give ! "
He also felt, in bitterness and pain :
She loves thee yet, is still thy own true love,

One friendly word but speak, one little word,
And break the spell dividing two fond hearts.
Once more they met : alas ! *no word* was spok'n.
Again—*no word* ! The spell remained unbrok'n !

They parted thus ; and as in minster-choir
Slowly dies out the altar-lamp's red light—
Languid awhile, then fitful, flickering up,
And burning bright, anon in darkness quenched :
So died the love in these. Regretted first ;
Then hot-returning ; at length forgotten ;
Or, if remembered, phantom of the past,—
Illusion, seemed it, of their earlier years.

Yet even now, at times, *she** wanders forth,
A ghost-like thing, beneath the silent moon !
Ris'n from a pillow, wet with her hot tears ;
And streaming too, with tears, her cheeks more wan
Than the pale moon that lights her silent way.
Dreams has she had, poor Maid—I know not what !
Then will her thoughts return to that sweet time
When sunshine filled the world, without a cloud ;
When *He* was at her side, ere yet a doubt
Had crossed her mind that he could prove untrue.
Nor had he proved untrue—she learnt too late !
And now so widely parted ! Nevermore,
Ah, nevermore to see each other's face !
A bitter thought : may God forgive them both !

* Adapted from the original.



A Wintery Sonnet.

[FROM THE FRENCH OF ALFRED DE MUSSET.]



LOVE the early frost upon a winter morn,
When neath the hunter's tread doth creak the
snow,
When whitened fields resound to clamorous
crow,
And the hunted doe bears rime upon her horn.

Forward to Paris! Journeying from afar,
I gain the city. From her heights I gaze
On palace, Louvre, and the mist-shrouded quays,
Where each red light is glimmering like a star.

I love the gray and misty time ; joyfully
I greet fair Seine, who saileth in her pride,
Like royal princess, on to Normandy !

And thou, too, wert in Paris ! " Ah, me ! " I cry,
" That I had known, of all fond hearts beside,
Thy noble heart could change so suddenly ! "



To Sister Marcelline.

[FROM THE SAME.]

POOOR Maid, thou art no longer fair !
Thy vigils in the tainted air
Have robbed thee of thy roses long ;
With working for the poor, thy hand
Is hard, like his who tills the land :
Thou seemest old and yet art young.

But labour, and a spirit brave,
Light up at times thy visage grave ;
And when the dying take thy hand,
It seemeth soft to them, and they
Will press it fondly still, and pray
To meet thee in the spirit-land.

Pursue thy solitary way ;
Each step thou tak'st is nearer day :
Thy work proceeds, thy goal is heaven.
We own there's much of evil here ;
We know, and yet we come not near
To them with sin and sorrow riven.

But thou their sin wilt not admit,
Though spent with toil in fighting it ;
So oft, indeed, thou breath'st a prayer
In secret for thy brothers' weal,
That when to Heaven thou dost kneel
Thine own heart's troubles have no share !



Fragment.

[AFTER THE SAME.]

HOW have I loved thee, Woman ! Never man
on earth
So deeply, madly, blindly loved, since Love
had birth !

But that wild-sweeping storm of passion now is o'er,
Unhappy One, nor can I ever love thee more !

Not yet a month, I stood enchained by a smile
From thee—a frown was death—but now thy every
wile

Availeth not ; nor tears, nor the fair head bowed low—
The magic spell is broken ; disenchanted now,

I stand before thee free, that prisoner was before—
Quite free ; nor wilt thou bind, or lead me prisoner
more !

As when a boy is left within his father's hall ;
And sees, and covets there, the armour on the wall :
He pulleth down—and yet is half with terror filled,
And still his hands they tremble—a helmet or a shield ;

Then frightened by its glitter, and by the growing
gloom,
Goes, and hides him in the pillows of his bedroom ;
Yet, when the morning comes, recovers from his fright,
And laughs when he recalls the terrors of the night.

So have I now awaked ; and broken is the chain,
For the spell that bound me once shall never bind
again !





The Negro to his Dead Master.

[AFTER THE FRENCH OF MARCELINE
DESBORDES-VALMORE.]

THE Sun of Night doth shine upon the hills,
O Master, dear ! why linger on the sand ?
Oh, let me bear thee from this fatal strand
To yonder huts, where safe the blackman dwells !
Why have thine eyes been closed so many days—
Sleepest thou always ?

Bowed are the woods before the cruel wind ;
Our ship lies broken by the angry flood ;
From thy pale cheek I wipe the stains of blood ;—
Oh, let us haste, that we may shelter find !
Why have thine eyes been closed so many days—
Sleepest thou always ?

What may the meaning be of this long dream ?
But haply thou'lt awake, when on the strand
Day breaks once more—thou'lt give to me thy hand ;
For who can sleep when the bright sun doth beam !
Why have thine eyes been closed so many days—
Sleepest thou always ?

Now morning dawns, and the rough-tossing main
Is still. Swift flies the sea-gull overhead ;
But, ah ! how pale thy manly cheek, so red
Erewhile ! Speak, Master dear, oh, speak again !
Why have thine eyes been closed so many days—
Sleepest thou always ?





The Angel and the Child.

[AFTER THE FRENCH OF JEAN REBOUL.]



OVER a couch, where a Child did sleep,
Once stood an Angel, crowned with light—
A mother was there, to watch and weep,
But she saw not the vision bright.

As the Angel gazed upon the Child,
It seemed as if a limpid flood
Gave back his heavenly features mild ;
He saw *himself* in flesh and blood !

“ O Child that seemest of heavenly birth,
Come, fly with me to yonder light !
Oh, stay not amid the clouds of earth,
With grief and sorrow still to fight !

“ Only to suffer bloomest thou here ;
Even earth's bliss is mingled with pain ;
Joy it is charged with sorrow and fear ;
Even to die mortals are fain !

“ Still, at each banquet, sitteth black Care ;
Never the sun shineth a day,
But on the morrow darkeneth the air,—
Changeth the scene to gloomy or gray.

“But shall it be? Shall dark Sorrow sit
On that young brow, so bright and pure?
It must not be; for thou’rt all unfit
Earth’s dreadful misery to endure.

“Then follow me! oh, give to me thy hand!
And, from the darkness of earth’s night,
I’ll lead thee to a far brighter land—
The region of eternal light!”

So spake the Angel, and, spreading wide
His wings, he seeks the heavenly throne;
And she who stands the sick-couch beside
Knows she has lost her darling son!





We Shall See—By-and-By.

[AFTER THE FRENCH OF CHATEAUBRIAND.]

THE Past is nothing ;
The Present less ;—
The Future alone
Can mortals bless.

We live, saying
That, "by-and-by,"
We'll be happy
Both you and I.

We live, saying
That, "by and by,"
We shall be rich,
Both you and I.

We live, saying
That "we shall see,"
Till Death o'ertakes
Both you and me !

Comes the Future
Filled with gladness,
'Tis the Present,
Filled with sadness !

Our Life it is
As at the play :
We're " going to see,"
Just every day.

The curtain lifts :
How eagerly
We strain the sight :
'Tis " by-and-by ! "

Such is our life,
As you'll agree ;
We live, saying
That " we shall see ! "

Here cometh one
All bowed with age ;
He finisheth
Life's pilgrimage ;

He long hath reached
Th' accustomed span,
The seventy years
Allotted Man ;

One telleth him
That he must die,
The old man mutters :
Ay, " by-and-by ! "

'Tis yet too soon ;
But he will die,
E'en while saying :
" Ay, by-and-by ! "

Tom Smith and Jones
Were friends when boys—
Have shared, since then,
Each other's joys ;

But Dame Fortune,
Who's always blind,
To Thomas Smith
Has proved unkind.

On his friend Jones
He counts for aid :
His " dear friend Jones
Will see them paid !"

"To prison I go,
This very night,
Unless you give
A bill at sight !"

But brother Jones
Is rather shy,
And answers Smith
With, "by-and-by !"

Convenient word
To man or maid,
For "by-and-by"
Is easily said.

And all along,
Until we die,
We are saying
This "by-and-by !"

Our whole life long,
'Tween you and me,
We are saying
That "we shall see !"





**"Flower-piece the First," from
"Siebenkäs," by Jean Paul F. Richter,**

[TURNED INTO ENGLISH BLANK VERSE.]

The Reader must not mistake the object of the following remarkable piece of writing which in the original is regarded as one of the world's masterpieces. "Jean Paul" is careful to tell us that he painted this terrible picture (in the form of a dream) for the express purpose of frightening the Atheist out of his Atheism. His object, therefore, must be the excuse of his boldness.

NCE, on a summer-afternoon, I lay
Full in the sunshine, and I fell asleep.
And dreaming there, methought I was awake,
And found myself within the churchyard bounds.
The steeple-clock that struck the eleventh hour
Had roused me from my slumbers—so it seemed.

I gazed into the empty vault of heaven,
To find the blessèd sun ; but he, methought,
Was hid, by an eclipse, behind the moon.
Around, on every side, were *open* graves !
And moved by some mysterious hand unseen,
The bone-house doors were swinging to and fro ;
While ghastly Shadows flitted o'er the walls,
Reflected from no living thing on earth ;
And other Shadows melted in the air !

The Children in their graves slept peacefully ;
But save the Children's, every tomb was void !
In heaven above, a grey and sultry mist
Hung low, in heavy folds. Anon, there rose
A Giant Shadow, vapour-like, that drew
The mist still closer, and I scarcely breathed.

Above, there broke upon my startled ear
A horrid crash, as of an avalanche.
Beneath, the quivering earth did open wide,
And wider ; and all Nature seemed to feel
The throes of a convulsion without bound.

Within the church, two Giant Forces now
Did struggle with each other, striving there
To mingle, but in vain. The tottering walls
Bore witness to their strife and dissonance.

Anon, a ghastly glimmer hovered o'er
The windows ; and beneath it fell the lead,
And the hard iron, as if molten, down.
Back-driven by the mist and reeling earth,
I gained that hideous temple at whose door,
Within two poison-bushes, brooding lay
Two basilisks, that glittered horribly.
Then passed I through a crowd of Shadows, all
Bearing the impress of dim centuries ;
And these stood round the altar ; and with each
The breast, and not the heart, quivered and pulsed !
One only, newly buried, quivered not,
But lay within his coffin peacefully ;

And on his pallid face I saw a smile
(As when, in life, a man may smile in dreams) ;
But even as I entered he awoke,
And smiled no longer. Slowly the dull lids
Of his dull eyes were lifted, when I shivering saw
The sockets both were empty ; and a wound,
Ghastly and deep, lay where the heart had pulsed !
Uplifting then his hands, he sought to pray ;
But while he lifted them, his arms dissolved,
And the two hands, still folded, fell away !

Above, upon the high church-dome, there stood
The dial-plate of dread Eternity ;
Yet on the face, index or number none.
But one black, awful finger pointed there ;
And the Dead sought by this to see the time !

Now, from aloft there sank a noble Form,
Saintly and mild, upon whose angel-front
Sat Grief—a sorrow not to be effaced !
And as he came, the Dead all cried aloud :
“ O sainted Christ ! say, is there yet a God ? ”
He answered, in a voice of anguish, “ None ! ”
And hearing this, through every ghastly Form
A shudder ran ; and, shuddering, they dissolved !
Which seeing, sadly then thus spoke aloud
The sainted Christ : “ I passed through all the worlds ;—
Mounting the suns, upon the milky way
I flew with speed through the wide wastes of heaven ;
But found no God ! Into the depths I went,
Lower and lower, far as Being casts

Its shadow ; into the abyss I gazed,
And gazing, cried aloud : ' Oh, where art thou
My Father, Author of this Universe ? '
But from the awful Deep no answer came ;
I only heard the everlasting storm
Which no one guides ! I saw Creation's bow
Above the wild abyss hang glittering ;
I saw it hang, I saw it trickle down !
Then, looking upward toward the Void immense,
With yearning gaze, I sought the Heavenly Eye—
The eye which pierceth the wide universe—
When, horrible to see, the socket huge,
And black, and bottomless, upon me glared ;
And Chaos old did feed Eternity !
Cry on, cry on, ye Discords ! shriek aloud !
And ye, pale Shadows, pass, since *He is not !* "

And hereupon the pallid Shadows passed ;
And growing thinner, melted in the air :
As when the breath, congealèd by the frost,
In winter, causeth oft a vapoury cloud
That passeth quick, as it was quickly formed,
So passed the Shadows, and their place was void.
Oh, then, a fearful sight ! the Children came
(Awakened by the tumult) from their graves ;
And pressing toward the high and noble Form
That stood, sublime, upon the altar there,
As with one voice, they cried, all piteously :
" Nay, Jesus sweet, say, are we Orphans all ? "
And with a streaming face, he answered, " Yea ! "
And as he spake, the Discords shrieked again,

Louder and louder ; and the tottering walls
Of that most hideous temple broke away,
And fell with horrid crash ! The church itself
Sank down, and with it all the Children there ;
And the whole solid Earth, the mighty Sun,
And this magnificent Universe, did sink,
And disappear, within the awful Void !

Then on the summit of wide Nature stood
The sainted Christ, and with tear-streaming eyes
Looked down ; and as he gazed, the universe,
With all its countless suns, appeared a mine
Bored in the blackness of Eternal Night,—
Each sun a mine-lamp, and each galaxy
A silver-vein ! And as he stood on high,
And gazed upon the grinding-press of worlds—
The torch-dance of the heavenly wild-fires there,
And countless coral-banks of beating hearts ;
And as he saw how world on world shook off
Its glimmering souls upon the sea of Death,
Even as a bubble, bursting on the sea,
Doth scatter swimming lights upon the waves—
He rose in majesty, with tearful eyes
Uplifted toward the Nothingness, and cried
Unto the Void immense : " Oh, Nothingness,
So dumb and dead ! Oh, cold Necessity !
Oh, frantic Chance ! say, Know ye what it is
That lies beneath you ? Ah, when will ye crush
The whole of this vast universe and me ?
Oh, thou wild Chance ! dost know, the while thou
treadst

The galaxies, extinguishing the suns,
And blotting out for aye the blessed stars,
What 'tis thou doest? Ah, how lonely now
Is each in this wide, universal Grave!

"How lone am I! O heavenly Father mine,
Where shall I find thy infinite bosom, sweet?
Oh, say, that I may rest thereon in peace!
If each torn Soul can its own parent be,
May it not be its own destroyer, too?
Is this I see beside me yet a Man?
Unhappy One! your little life below
Is but the sigh of Nature, or it is
An empty echo! Lo, a mirror shines,
In convex wise, upon the tiny Earth—
Upon the ashes of her countless Dead;
And out of *this* ye sickly phantoms rise!
Look now into that wild abyss, o'er which
A cloud of ashes moveth without end.
Seest thou those reeking mists that ever rise
From out the Void, and know'st thou what they mean?
They are as exhalations, yet they hold
A thousand systems, and ten thousand suns,
That from the vasty Deep rise ceaselessly!
Mark well those mists, in which the Future mounts,
The Present falls. Know'st thou thy Earth again?"

Then casting down his eyes, still moist with tears,
The sainted Christ saw feebly shining there
His tiny Earth, amid the infinite Void;
And seeing, cried aloud, all piteously:

" Ah, that I lived on earth, as in the Past !
For I was happy there, since I had then
My Father blest, the Infinite, the All-good !
And from the shining mountains could look up
Right cheerfully to the immeasurable heaven,
And press upon his holy image still
My wounded breast ; and even in the hour
Of death, cry out : O Father, take thy Son
That bleedeth here, and lift him to thy heart !

" Ah ! but too happy ye, who on the Earth
Remain ; who lean upon your Father still,
In faith and trustfulness ; nor with a doubt
Are troubled yet—too happy, if ye knew !
E'en now, I see your sun that goeth down
In splendour there, behind the purple hills ;
I see you kneel amid the blooming fields ;
I see the joy-tears streaming from your eyes
As, with uplifted hands, ye fondly gaze
Into the open heaven, and cry aloud :
" Me, too, thou knowest, thou Almighty One,
And all these wounds that bleed ; and after death
Thou'lt close them all ! "

Unhappy Creatures, ye !

Not after death your bleeding wounds shall close.
Ah ! when the Sorrow-laden layeth down
His galled and bleeding back within the earth,
To sleep until a fairer dawn shall break
Of Virtue, Truth, and everlasting Joy,
He wak'neth in the stormy Chaos, dark—
Amid the everlasting Midnight still ;

And morning cometh never ; nor shall he,
Howe'er he seek, his Infinite Father find !
Mortal, beside me, if thou breathest yet
The terrene air, pray to thy Father *now* ;
Else, never more that blessed dew of tears
Which springs from faith shall fall upon thy cheek !"

So spake the holy Christ, when, falling down,
I gazed into the sparkling universe ;
And there I saw upborne the giant rings
Of the Great Serpent of Eternity,
Which round the universe itself had coiled !
And winding there innumerable ways,
Each from its place it swept the glittering spheres ;
And crashing, squeezed the mighty World at once
Within the narrow limits of a Church —
And all around grew dark and horrible !
Then, looking up, I saw, widely-outstretched,
The *hammer* which should strike the final hour—
The *last of Time*,—and utterly destroy
The whole wide universe—when I awoke !

And being awake, I wept that I could still
Pray to the Father, Infinite, and All-good !
And my deep joy, my tears, and faith in Him—
These were my prayer. And rising there, I saw
The great sun glowing deep behind the corn,
Far in the west ; and giving to the moon,
That rose from out the east, a twilight gleam
Of his own splendour. And, 'tween sky and earth,
A transient insect-world was stretching forth

Its short and tiny wings rejoicingly—
Living, like me, before the Infinite God !
And from all Nature, far and wide, there flowed .
Sweet tones, as if from distant evening bells !

NOTE.—In making a first, and, so far as he is aware, *the* first attempt at the task of turning into English blank verse this wonderful "Dream" of Jean Paul's, the Author has felt himself at liberty to draw whatever help he could from the two or three English prose translations known to him, in addition to his own ; but chiefly he has drawn upon the masterly rendering by Carlyle.





The Cracked Bell.

[FROM THE FRENCH OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.]

HI bitter, yet sweet, in the winter-time,
While crackles the fire to sit by the blaze,
And call up the memories of far-off days,
At the misty hour when the church-bells chime !

O happy church-bell, with a voice of power !
In spite of the years, he is ringing yet ;
As a watchman tried, he shall not forget,
When the time comes round, to call out the hour.

My soul is a bell that hath lost its tone ;
And when with its songs t'would people the air,
And loosen the tongue of its wild despair,
What is it I mutter—a wordless moan !—

Like the cry of a soldier that wounded lies
By a lake of blood, amid heaps of slain,
That striveth for speech, in uttermost pain,
But dumbly sinks down on the dead, and dies !



A HANDFUL OF
GROUND-FLOWERS.



——— *tibi lilia plenis,*
Ecce ! ferunt Nymphæ calathis ; tibi candida Nais,
Pallentes violas et summa papavera carpens,
Narcissum et florem jungit bene olentis anethi :
Tum casiâ atque aliis intexens suavis herbis,
Mollia luteolâ pingit vaccinia calthâ.—Virg.

——— Nature speaks
A parent's language, and, in tones as mild
As e'er hushed infant on its mother's breast,
Wins us to learn her lore.—*Wilson.*



A Handful of "Ground-Flowers."

DEIGN to accept a handful of *Ground-flowers*,"
Mingled with *Fern-leaves*, culled in

summer hours,

In British woods, or by some murmuring rill
That, ever "flowing at its own sweet will,"
Adown the vale or through the mead doth glide.
A modest flower or two I've culled, beside,
In foreign gardens ; but all garish bloom
I leave for others : always in my room
Place me a vase of such sweet, homely flowers
As, nourished openly by sun and showers,
May still be found in this dear land of ours—
Flowers truly wild, or which in garden-plots
Seem wildlings still : the blue forget-me-nots,
The snow-white lily, polyanthus pied,
Rich-scented woodbine, pinks, and London-pride ;
The sky-blue speedwell, and the cranesbill, too ;
And hyacinths and harebells, also blue ;
Loosestrife so yellow ; pilewort yellow, too—

Precocious flower, that bravely strives, you know,
To push its blossoms when the fierce winds blow.*
The early cinquefoil, too, I love to see,
Blooming in March ; the pale Anemone
Which, when you closely look, will blush at you,
Like to a maiden sweet that once I knew.
Nor have I yet included, it is true,
The pensive pansy, and the violet blue—
(This by the hedge, that in my garden grows,)
Nor yet the lychnis, and the sweet wild-rose ;
But if I were to number every flower
We make a pet of, it would take an hour !

And why do we these modest flowers prefer
To those that flaunt within the bright parterre ?
'Tis that they softly speak of what we *were*.
It is that they are symbols of the true,
And pure, and holy : they are dear to you
Because you loved them, breathed their fragrance
mild,
And plucked them in the meadows, when a child—
Because the poetry of your young life,
'Ere aught of care you knew, or aught of strife,
Lies in those bursting buds, and bells, so blue—
It is for this that they are dear to you.
Still, through long vistas of the memory,
You see what you have been—both you and I—
You feel in part what you have felt before,
In that rich time when daisies by the score,

* The Pilewort (*Ranunculus Ficaria*) is sometimes found in flower so early as February.

By hundreds, and by thousands, met your eyes,
 And seemed to you an opening paradise.
A part you feel ; but ah, how small a part !
 How rich was then, how poor is now your heart—
 How hollow, and how false ! These hot-house
 flowers,

How like the world, this boasted world of ours,
 With all its sickly "forms," and vanities,
 Its trifling, its pretence, and its "half-lies"—
 So called indeed, but which are not half-true !
 Are not these "forced exotics"—I and you ?
 Well may the country's heavenly freshness charm
 The thoughtful heart and true, long cramped by
 "form,"

And narrow "fashion." Let my garden-plots
 Be filled with pansies, pinks, forget-me-nots.—
 Take far away from me these flaring flowers
 That you have brought with care from foreign
 bowers.

Gaudy and scentless, they have little hold
 On my affections ; like a maiden bold,
 Yet without grace, they hold their heads too high.
 Give me "old things" I loved in days gone by.
 Give me the homely flowers, for which I sigh—
 That bloom, unforced, beneath the British sky—
 The flowers of friendship, love, and poesy—
 That when I see them I may dream once more
 The sweetly-foolish dreams I dreamed before,
 If that may be ! So soon as you have found
 "*Herb true-love*," go and plant it in the ground
 Beneath my window. For it *I've* looked in vain,

On many a day—why should I look again?
Yea, many a time, I've sought it far and wide,
O'er hill and dale, and by the river side;
But all in vain: I think it must have died,—
I know that many plants have disappeared
From British gardens, and can't now be reared.
Surely this must have perished with the rest,
Which is a pity, since it was the best!
But while *such* flowers are getting very rare,
The plant called "Bitter-sweet" is everywhere!
For "Mercury Goosefoot" late I widely ranged,
And found "King Henry"* to an Emperor
changed!

But there is still good store of lovely flowers,
And pretty plants, to decorate my bowers.
The hills are lofty, and the meadows wide
And green, and there are shady woods beside;
And countless rills and streams, that softly glide
Through verdant pastures, rich in lovely blooms—
These will I pluck, and bear them to my rooms;
And to my garden I'll transplant each flower
That o'er my heart in other days had power.
The "simple things" that I have loved of yore
I'll have again; and as I dreamed before,
In the old days, I'll *try* to dream once more!

All sordid things I'll cast beyond the pale:
Here's "Moneywort!"* but ah, its branches trail

* "*Chenopodium Bonus-Henricus*," "Mercury Goosefoot," "Good King Henry."

* *Lysimachia Nummularia*

So sweetly o'er the stones, and o'er the wood,
In this dear nook : I would not, if I could,
Uproot it from the spot. Its lovely flowers,
Of brightest yellow, freshened by the showers,
How do they shine amid the soft, green leaves !
The plant must stay ; and yet it sadly grieves
My heart to be reminded of man's greed,
And lust of gold, if only by a weed !

You shall not find me rich, nor yet so poor ;
For me enough to keep an open door,
An open heart, and still an open eye
For all the changing scenes of earth and sky.
I would not be found deaf to Misery's tale,
While she stands shivering in the bitter gale
Of adverse fortune ; something would I give
Of what I have, for all the world must live.
Yet is my chiefest wealth within the heart ;
And of *this* wealth I seek to give a part,
Though in weak verses, written without art.
Oh, there are riches in this world, untold,
That each may gather—better far than gold ;
And these are met with in the heart and mind
Of man : nay seek, and ye shall always find !
I envy not my friends their worldly goods,
Whilst I have here such wealth of lilac-buds,
Full of sweet promise ; and each bud and bell,
If you will ask it, shall have much to tell !
So long as I can see, and strongly feel
The charms of Nature, let Dame Fortune's wheel
Turn as it may ! Ah, could I but reveal

The joy profound that Nature to me gives,
You'd say : " He is the happiest man that lives ! "
But kindly Nature open is to all ;
And with a mother's voice doth softly call
To everyone that travails here below,—
On his pale cheek her gentlest breezes blow,
On his dull ear her sweetest music falls,
In song of bird that to its mate-bird calls,
In the stream's flow, in tiny water-falls,
And in the rustle of a thousand leaves—
Oh, there is solace for each one that grieves !
Earth's scenes of beauty still the eyes shall bless
Of all who are not blind to loveliness.
I prize the joy I draw from woodland dells
More than the gold that your full coffer fills !
Rich men have painted canvas in their rooms ;
But, look ye heavenward : note the pomps and
 glooms—
The splendours, ever-changing, of the sky,
By day and night ! Shall canvas-pictures vie
With these, so grand, that open are to all ?
And note this humble flower upon the wall,
With what a dazzling sheen it bloometh there ;
While each to paint it tries, but in despair
That he shall ever match a thing so fair !
All these, and more, are of the sky and earth,
Common to all. Oh, life is little worth,
Or much, as we make choice, in *this* at least ;
And man may be an angel or a beast !
Go thou seek Nature, who is ever kind—
She'll hang, within the chambers of thy mind,

Far finer pictures than the French shall find
 In their vast Louvre famed ! And if thou art
 A "Man of Sorrows," she will ease thy smart
 With gentlest hand, as would a mother mild,
 Whose heart still yearns toward her suffering child.

The Moss Campion (*Silene acaulis*)
 Mountain Forget-me-not (*Myosotis alpestris*).*

WHO climbs the mountains will have often
 found,
 On many a rocky point of British ground,
 As sweet, as lovely, and as bright a gem
 As ever decked an emperor's diadem !
 Close-clinging, moss-like, and with purple stars
 Besprent, 'tis found upon the highest scars,†
 And called ; the *Mossy Campion*. Passing sweet
 It is, when you have clomb the heights, to greet
 This darling flower, whose myriad purple eyes **
 Brighten the mountain with their lovely dyes ;
 Or, *blush* upon you, with a sweet surprise,
 When, searching plants in some sequestered nook
 Among the tumbled rocks, you chance to look

* As this is the only species of *Myosotis* with any appreciable scent, the name attached to it by Kitaibel, *suaveolens*, would seem, of all the many names given to it, by much the most appropriate.

† I have gathered the *Moss Campion* at altitudes of over 4,000 feet, on the Scottish mountains.

** I take, here, the usual "poet's licence," with respect to *shades of red*, not forgetting the Latin synonym, *purpureus*, as applied to red. "Rosy eyes" would hardly be tolerated !

Into this mountain-darling's mountain-home—
Its cradle rocked by all the winds that roam !
As when a country maid, remote from town,
Or city, in some retirèd nook has grown
To beauteous womanhood, so modest, meek,
Look but upon her, and her virgin-cheek
Will burn with shame ! But ah, too seldom found
This type of womanhood on British ground,
Or any other ! Modesty, I ween,
Is still the very rarest plant that's seen.

Another flower there is, that does outvie
The deepest heaven, and mock the summer-sky ;
A *sapphire* on the mountain's sober brow,
The sweet *Forget-me-not*, that lovers know !
More densely blue upon the mountains, far,
Than her fair sisters in the valley are ;
And sweeter, too, upon the mountain-brow,
Than those *Forget-me-nots* that bloom below.†
The traveller who, with Flora for his guide,
In summer's prime, hath clomb the western side
Of Lawers' hill,* has there a picture found—
A sight that is not matched on English ground.
Steep are the cliffs, and bare, that rise above,
But on their highest peaks has Nature wove,
And spread, a lovely braid of brightest blue,
That doth surpass the deepest heaven in hue.
The fabric of this garland is the flower

† As previously stated, the Mountain *Forget-me-not*, unlike its lowland congeners, has an appreciable and very fragrant scent, though a volatile one.

* Ben Lawers, in Perthshire, the highest point in the great Breadalbane chain of mountains.

Whose richness here to paint I have not power ;
 Nor could the Laureate, in his happiest hour,
 Painting with pencil dipp'd in magic dyes,
 Depict this darling plant, whose heavenly eyes,
 Serenely blue, outvie the deepest skies !
Forget-me-not ! Not he that once hath seen
 Thy lovely face shall e'er forget, I ween !

Eager I wait, till summer come again,
 When I shall climb the heights of Breadalbane ;
 And see once more, in her full summer pride,
 My darling flower ; and *blushing* at her side
 The *Campion* bright, by her alone outvied ; †
 Though each in her peculiar way so sweet,
 To speak of rivalry it were unmeet.

† The *Silene* is earlier-blooming than the *Myosotis*, though they are often met with together in full flower.

The Lily of the Valley.

(*Convallaria majalis*.)



CHASTE²ST follower in fair Flora's train,
 Dear Lily of the Vale ! I once again
 Invoke the Muses' aid, thy charms to paint ;
 Since late the Woodland Nymphs did make
 complaint
 That thou, the sweetest of all flowers that blow,
 Didst of the Poets nigh forgotten grow
 Within the woods ;—while all the valleys rung
 With praise of thy compeers, thou still unsung

Didst bloom retired, as some chaste, holy Nun,
Who takes the veil when life has but begun ! *
He sings that will in praise of the gay flowers,
In colours decked, that flaunt in summer hours ;
But I would worship at another shrine :
The modest Violet is a flower of mine—
The sweet Forget-me-not ; and I would twine,
Full oft, an odorous wreath of the Woodbine.
The Poet's Lily, Lilac too is dear
To my fond heart ; but one is yet more near,
More precious still, and I have lov'd her long,—
It is, dear Friend, the burden of my song,
Sweet Lily of the Vale !

O modest Flower ! most chaste and saintly flower !
Thee have I loved and longed for since the hour
When first thy meek and maiden loveliness,
By Dryads guarded, my fond eyes did bless.
It was upon a bright and lovely day—
Too rare in England—and the month was May—
Sweet June not distant. I had wandered far,
Since early morn, o'er many a cliff and scar
Of rocky Westmorland. The sun was still
High in the heavens, and at a babbling rill
My thirst I gladly slaked ; there, too, I found
Within the woods, upon a rising ground,
A seat, on which I threw, in thankfulness,
My tired limbs. 'Twas then a sight did bless

* It is remarkable that the Poets should have paid, on the whole, such slender tribute to this lovely flower, which has its charms for even the least susceptible. The above is, of course, little more than the suggestion, or "beginning," of a poem, intended to have been completed if leisure had offered.

These eyes which still within my memory
Doth dwell, and shall be with me till I die.
The poet, in his verse, doth truly say :
“ A thing of beauty is a joy for aye.”

Within the dell retired—a sylvan dell—
Protected by the Dryads, there did dwell
A lovely sisterhood of Lilies fair,
Whose fragrant breath did richly scent the air !
Not one, nor twenty, but a thousand stood,
All meek and chaste, within the silent wood—
A blessed sight ! I gaz'd as in a dream ;—
Scarce of this earth did the fair vision seem.
I thought of dim cathedral—virgins fair,
Devout and holy—incense in the air,
And songs ascending. In the sylvan gloom,
Methought I saw full many a silent tomb,
All rifted now, but which erewhile had held
Some giant warrior, or some hoary scald,
Some pompous noble, statesman, lady fair !
Entranc'd, I gaz'd for long, till on the air
Broke sounds of life, and human voices near—
The vision passed—the phantoms disappear—
A country lad salutes me : “ he could tell
That I had come to see ‘ the Lilies’ Dell.’ ”
And that sweet dell for ever treasured lies
Among my fond heart's holiest memories.

O Lily, heavenly sweet, divinely fair,
Whose fragrant breath with perfume fills the air !
Thou. mindst me of a maiden—one of few—

Chaste as thyself, and pure as morning dew,—
Blooming alone, in patience, meek and mild ;
Exhaling all her sweetness on the wild,
Untrodden hills—who all unseen, unknown,
Her honeyed breath untasted, woman grown,
Did still bloom on, in sweetness, to the last,
A maiden lone, till life was overpassed !
Sweet Mountain Lily ! let white virgins come,
Clad in white robes, and deck thy silent tomb
With Lilies of the Vale, so chastely fair ;
And while their fragrance fills the perfumed air,
Each tender Soul shall sing a requiem there !

The Strawberry-leaved Cinquefoil.*



HERE is a little Flower that grows
In all the hedges near—
A very modest flower, that blows
Right early in the year.

I live not in the country quite,
Yet is the country near ;
And it is often my delight
To pluck this floweret dear.

It blooms so early, that its peers
Are counted on your hand ;
And I have loved it all the years ;
Nor pass I through the land

* (*Potentilla Fragariastrum.*)

Without a tribute paid to this
Meek member of the band
Of early blooms ; though well I wis
You would not call it grand.

I cannot pass, to tell you true,
With my respects unpaid
To this dear flower ; whate'er I do
I never can evade

Its modest claim. It always says :
" Pass not your humble friend !
You knew me well in other days—
Has friendship then an end ?"

" It hath not so !" I answer straight,
And stoop to greet the flower :
Bid not your humble friends to " wait "
In your most prosperous hour !

How could I pass it coldly by,
This friend of other days,
In Winter oft my only joy ?—
Nay let me sing its praise,

In modest wise, as it beseems
A very humble plant ;—
I will not give you " gorgeous dreams,"
Nor any kind of " rant."

But let us rise, and use our eyes ;
The flower of which I spoke,
On yonder bank, the storm defies—
Is safer than the oak

That spreads aloft its branches high,
And groaneth in the wind :
Obscurity is safe, and I
Shall therefore safety find !

The few who tower above their peers
Must groan like yonder oak :
They have abundant cause for tears
Who are not common folk !

The modest plant I write about
A hundred times you've seen ;
From sheltered bank it peepeth out,
With leaves of bluish green.

It has a pretty star-like flower,
As white as driven snow ;
And I have lingered many an hour,
As here I linger, now,

To admire the perfect harmony
Of Nature's nice design ;
For vainly might the artist try
To match this flower of mine.

Though simple it may seem, there's yet
On earth *no* " simple thing ;"
You catch the form, but can you get
At Nature's colouring ?

Ah, no ! there's many a mystery yet
About the humblest flower ;
Though foolish Man will oft forget
How limited his power ;

And boast how very much he knows !
An idle boast is this ;
He knows "a bit" about the *How's*,
But knows not *Why* it is !

The Shallow-pate will often say :
"There's nothing strange to me
In all I've seen ; 'tis clear as day !"
Thou fool ! upon the knee

I'll have thee bend, and homage pay
Unto that higher Power
Who rules the world ; I'll have thee pray
To Him, this very hour !

Thou fool ! if there is naught that's strange
To thee upon this ball,
'Tis that thy thought hath little range,
Or it hath none at all !

It is a world of *mystery* ;
Nor ever yet shall Man,
(Though often vainly he will try,)
Explain the mighty plan !

Then chide me not, if I bend low
Beside this simple flower,
That in the common hedge doth grow,
While fed by sun and shower.

Then chide me not, if I admire
This very humble plant,
That meekly braves the storm so dire,
Nor tell me that I "rant !"

Although the Eastern breeze may blow,
So cruel and unkind,
On many a bank, as well I know,
The Cinquefoil you will find.

With silken cloak it wraps around
Its blooms of snowy white ;
'Tis met with in the poorest ground—
'Tis never out of sight.

Before the yellow caltha comes,
Or primrose in the vale ;
Before the pallid wind-flower's blooms
Are nodding in the gale,

The white-flowered Cinquefoil you shall see*
In all the hedges near ;
Then can you wonder if to me
The flower hath grown so dear ?

In early March, a bank I know
More sheltered from the wind
Than others far ; and there I go
My modest flower to find.

Nor can the miser ever gloat
Upon his shining hoard
As I upon this wild-flower dote ;—
He can't, upon my word !

Such and so many are the springs
Of joy that bubble near,
If we will only notice things
That lie about us here.

* It is the only white-flowered Cinquefoil commonly met with in Britain.

In vain shall Fortune frown upon
The man of open heart
And open eye; beneath the sun,
There's joy in every part.

He drinks at a perennial fount
The waters cool and clear;
And scarcely needs to heaven to mount,
Since heaven to him's so near!

The Little Sylvan Loosestrife.*



KNOW a very lovely flower—
Whose charms were never told
By poet yet, in hall or bower—
With hue of brightest gold.

Its leaves are of the softest green,
And trail upon the ground;
But though 'tis very often seen,
I never yet have found

One British bard to tune a lay
In praise of this dear flower;
And hence it is that I essay,
Who have an idle hour,

To pay my humble tribute here,
In very humble verse,
Unto a plant, to me more dear
Than I can e'er rehearse!

* *Lysimachia nemorum.*

The Sylvan Loosestrife is the flower,
Or "Loosestrife of the Groves ;"
And e'en from earliest childhood's hour,
'T hath been among my "loves."

The daisies and the crowfoots bright,
I well remember yet
When they were *new* to me—such sights
How can we e'er forget !

A sheet of yellow and of white,
They covered the hill-side :
And dazed with joy, mad with delight,
I clapped my hands and cried.

But when I saw beneath a tree,
Within a shady grove,
Through which a path was leading me,
My native vale above,

The flower of which I spake before,
My joy was most intense—
My pleasure-cup quite brimming o'er,
While there beside the fence

I lingered long that summer day,—
It was a vision fair—
A revelation, shall I say,
That reached me unaware !

How rich the yellow, and how soft
The green of foliage there !
And though, since then, I've seen it oft,
'Tis just to me as fair

This hour, as when within the grove
It came a sweet surprise—
Filled my fond heart with purest love,
With tears my youthful eyes.

Thus from the first this flower hath been
My pretty sylvan pet ;
And e'en when woods are bare, I ween,
My Loosestrife's blooming yet !

My native valley, green and bright,
Doth flash upon the eye
Of Memory still, and with delight
Doth fill me constantly.

Above that vale a "walk" there winds,
Yclept the "Lovers' Path," *
Where each fond maid her true love finds
That a true lover hath.

There doth the little wicked Boy,
With bow and arrows laden,
Disport himself, his constant joy
To shoot at youth and maiden !

And many a brave *man* hath been shot,
Who deemed that he was strong,
Upon that "Lovers' Walk," I wot,
Ere he had trod it long !

* Doubtless the "Lovers' Walks" of this (and *every other*) country are pretty numerous and also pretty much travelled ; but a *more* lovely "Lovers' Walk" than that here indicated the present writer does not remember to have seen.

E'en I, whose blood doth cooler run
Than once upon a time,
Recall when Cupid found it fun
To mark this breast of mine.

But that is past : of *withered* flowers
I am not writing here,
wish to speak of brighter hours,
And things that I hold dear.

Then let me say, when I recall
The scenes of which I spoke,
The hills, the woods, the waterfalls,
And the sweet " Lovers' Walk "

Of that my native valley fair,
I still distinctly see
The little Sylvan Loosestrife there,—
I see it constantly,

And in the very place where I
Did see it long ago ;
So if you ask me : " Did it die?"
I'll plainly answer : No !

That flower for me is blooming yet
In its accustomed nook ;
Although *no Loosestrife* you would get,
Were you to go and look.

It was, I think, but yesterday
That, walking in the wood,
I spied the plant upon my way,
While in a pensive mood.

"Few are the flowers that, hereabouts
When *seeking*, one can meet ;
Now, quite unsought, this pet peeps out,
My wondering eyes to greet !"

"The very flower in other years
I joyed so much to see—
That brings the smiles, that brings the tears,
That is so dear to me !"

These words I speak, and bending there
I pluck one lovely bloom ;
And, richer than a king, I bear
The treasure to my home.

One bloom I only plucked, I know,
And quite a score were left ;
Yet I regret it even now,
It was a thoughtless theft ;

For not another plant is near,
And you might travel wide
Before the flower I speak of here
Were found on the hedgeside.

And truly 'tis a "treasure-trove ;"
And I shall often steal,
All furtively, to see my "love ;"
Nor save to *One* reveal

Where it is found. This very day,
I told its whereabouts
To my dear Friend ; and this I'll say,
He'd not have found it out.

For there, half hidden from the sight,
Amid a tangle wild
Of bramble, briar, and hawthorn white,
It bloomed in beauty mild.

It blooms unseen by common eye,
As might an eastern belle ;
Save two dear friends, all pass it by ;
But these two love it well !

It blooms unseen, and *gildeth* there,
With its bright yellow flower,
The common hedge ; although so fair,
“ It might have decked a bower.”

It shuns the heat, it seeks the shade,
It hideth from the sun ;
It minds me of a modest maid
That’s scarcely to be won ;

That hangs her head, and hardly dares
A single word to speak ;
And yet doth boast a beauty rare—
As fair as she is meek.

It minds me of a man of worth,
Who’s free from all pretence,
From pride, vain-glory, and so forth,
And rich in innocence ;

It mindeth me of one that’s dear,
Whose delicate heart I know ;
And if I were to see him here,
I’d plainly tell him so !

The Purple Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*.)

*Le lilas qui pend, avec grace,
Offre ses bouquets ingénus.*



GRACIOUS Flower! that comest from the
bright East

To be the darling of the cloudy West—*

Flinging thy heavenly fragrance far and wide
O'er blooming gardens ; nor on the hedge-side
So seldom seen—of cottagers the pride.
In beauteous May, full oft, will he who roams
Have seen thee bright'ning scores of British homes
With fragrant pyramids of purple blooms—
Peeping about the porch, above, below—
In at the open window ; and, e'en now,
There comes a cloud of fragrance from the pale
Hard by, that, sweeter than Arabian gale,
Doth greet my ravished senses ; while my rooms
Are crowded all with vases filled with blooms
Plucked from my garden-fences. Thus the air
About me is all laden with the rare,
Rich fragrance of the Lilac. Ah, dear Flower!
Thy breath inhaling thus, full many an hour
Of my young life, so sweet, comes back to me
From out the past. Here, whilst I smell at thee,

* The Lilac was originally brought from Persia. That a plant of the tropical climes, says Phillips (*Sylva Florifera*, vol. II.) should be so hardy as to stand the severest winters of the greater part of Europe is admirable in the Lilac.

I see again the house beside the wood,
The cherry tree, near which the rose-bush stood,
All white in summer time ; and there below,
Beside the rockery, does the Lilac grow,
So prized of all ! The delicate barrenwort,
The scarlet lychnis—flowers of many a sort
Are peeping from the rocks ; and somewhat higher
Grow “ everlasting ” and the fragrant brier,—
Near which a gracious Form is moving now,
Watching with care, and often bending low,
A gentle Mother, ah, too soon removed
From those dear hearts and scenes she fondly
loved !


And this, sweet Lilac, when I smell at thee,
In *living* colours is brought back to me ;
And whilst a thousand memories arise,
Evoked thus subtly, on my spirit lies
A sadness that is sweet—a pleasant pain,
That feeling once I yet would feel again !

Most gracious Flower ! of sweetness greater far
Than the most sugared lovers' kisses are !
Of form most elegant, and beauty rare,
Of colour that is matchless, the despair
Of artists ! * Would that I could tell the love
I bear to thee, sweet flower ; but 'tis above
All words of mine. I can but smell and sigh ;
And smelling, sighing, almost I could die—
My soul, inhaling thy sweet soul, would rise
To regions of the Blest, beyond the skies !

* It is said that Spaendonck dropped his pencil, in despair, before a bunch of lilac.

The Woodbine or Honeysuckle.

(*Lonicera Periclymenum.*)

HO does not love the Woodbine ! Who
can go
Into the wildwood, when its "bugles"
blow,

And breathe the fragrance of the honeyed flowers,
Nor feel the rapture of the blissful hours !
Nay, Joy's sweet self lives in a woodbine-bower,
When she would dwell in a strict privacy ;
Nor dares intrude upon her bird or bee.*

Ah, well I wot how, in the dear, old days,
When all the paths I trod were "flowery ways,"
I culled with rapture many a hornèd bloom,
And, drunken with its sweetness, bore it home.
Seemed it the very breath of wood-sprite fair
That I had deftly caught, and prisoned there—
Caught in the woods, amid a bower of bliss—
Nor could I tire of its deliciousness :
The honeyed tubes, I sucked them, one by one ;
Nor felt content till every flower had gone ;
Then for fresh store I to the woods did roam,
And, laden with fresh sweetness, bore it home.
But one high branch, that hung above the way,
Defied my puny efforts all the day ;

* Nature and science are so far with the writer in this extravagance that *bees* are seldom to be found about this plant, for the simple reason that the nectary of the woodbine being narrow, and what is called tubulous, the sweet liquid lying at the bottom is quite out of the *bees'* reach, though easily accessible to some other classes of insects.

And when, next morn, I passed again that way,
And found some one had borne the blooms away,
Hot tears shed I, in my most passionate grief;
Though in the weeping found I quick relief.

Happy I'd been had "Fate," 'tween *then* and *now*,
Dealt on this head and heart no heavier blow.
But since that hour I've wept for bitterer cause;
For "Fate" since then hath dealt his cruellest blows!

But *who* escapes? and why should I repine
When full upon me, here, the sun doth shine;
And the woods whisper, blown on by the breeze;
And for one blissful day, I'm free to take mine ease!

Not on soft couch, within the gilded room,
Comes "ease" to me: far o'er the hills I roam;
From breezy heights I view the landscape wide;
Down wooded dales I press, with eager stride,
Nor hardly linger by the river side;
Far, far behind I leave each "beaten way,"
But in the wilds I make a longer stay;
And *there* it is that we will spend "to-day."

"In —— wilds, then," says my Friend to me;
"Let us explore the hills and vales of T——!"

We roamed again the dear, familiar woods;
We stopped to listen to the tumbling floods;
We threaded many a winding, woodland way;
By many a bubbling fountain did we stay
To slake our thirst, upon that summer's day;
But, above all, we sought one wild ravine,
Where the bright waters of a moorland stream,

THE WOODBINE.

Fresh from their source upon the breezy hill,
Pour over rocks, and all the valley ** fill
With a wild music, that I loved to hear
When in past days I often wandered there ;
But in this vale, far more than all, I knew
The favourite flower, the delicate woodbine grew,
While from its elfin horns the fairy wood-sprites blew !

Behold the valley to the Woodbine dear !
The wild ravine of which I spake is here :
Be bold, O Friend, to follow where I lead,
And of thy courage thou shalt reap the meed.

With eager footsteps, we descend the hill ;
We clamber over wet rocks dripping still ;
We tumble and we scramble as we may
'Mid jutting stones and trees that bar the way ;
Now up the hill-side we must mount amain,
And if we fall we needs must mount again.
Here have I tumbled prone into the brook,
Whence quick emerging, with a half-drowned look,
I boldly climb the steep hill once again,
With every nerve and muscle on the strain.
Once more the path descends, and down we go
Into the depths of yonder clough below ;
And pick our way among the tumbled stones ;
And run, each step, the risk of broken bones.
We clamber on till we confront a wall
Of solid rock, o'er which the stream doth fall ;
The slippery ledges we must climb with care,
And a good courage, or we perish there :

** More strictly speaking, a gorge, or clough.

Take heart, O Friend, the way, though somewhat rough,

Hath a wild beauty, 'tis a MOORLAND CLOUGH !

We brushed through plummy groves of lady-fern
That graceful grew beside the mountain-burn ;
The buckler fern its dark green fronds did show,
And oft beside it would the male-fern grow ;
The mountain-fern, with leaves of yellowish green,
In plenty grew within the moist ravine ;
And higher up, where heathery moors 'gan show,
In tiny coves did shining hard-ferns grow ;
And many a charming wild-flower there did blow
That I recall but cannot mention now.

But Woodbine sweet, the honeyed Woodbine fair,
Was most at home, for it was everywhere !
Its flowers, so fragrant, scented all the clough ;
Nor of its sweetness could we drink enough.

In many a brake, 'mid leaves of bluish green,
The luscious blooms of creamy white were seen ;
And often, though invisible, we knew,
By its sweet odour, where the Woodbine grew ;
Then the delicious secret must be proved,
And the rich prize borne home to them we loved.

Lush undergrowth was there, and many a flower
That o'er this heart in other days had power—
Full many a darling, and full many a pet,
On *each* of which I'll write a sonnet yet ;
But, drunken with the Woodbine's odours still,
In its sweet praise must I these pages fill !

To more than one low, stunted tree it clung,
That grew beside, and o'er the torrent hung ;
Round many a taller tree, too, did it clasp
Its loving arms, until the tree would gasp :
" O amorous Woodbine, with the odorous breath !
If thou embrace me, I am doomed to death !
Nay then, fond Woodbine, climb not quite so high ;
Though sweet thy breath, it is not sweet to die !"
(Methought I heard these words while passing by)
But, unrelenting, the destroyer clings,
And o'er the tree a perfumed garland flings ;
She loads the air with her rich-scented breath,
And whom she loves, her love doth doom to death.

The fragrant wreaths, encircling every brake,
They stop the way at every step we take ;
And amorous arms catch at us as we pass,
As might the arms of a too ardent lass :
Ah, sweet arrest ! when honey bars the way.
Ah, sweet arrest ! when sweetness doth waylay.
But sweeter still when *True-love* bids us stay !
Let me by sweetness only be waylaid ;
And at Love's call let still my steps be stayed !

Nay never, sure, in this green land of ours,
Had we yet culled such richly-scented flowers !
And if we plucked too free the fragrant bloom,
Pardon the theft, since we so seldom roam :
Compelled to husband all the precious hours,
Rare visits pay we to the Woodbine bowers :
Though longing much amid the wilds to roam,
Our hapless lot is still, to stay at home !


“It's only a Trifle.”

Rerum Natura tota est nusquam magis quam in minimis.

Plin. Nat. Hist.

Willst du dich am Ganzen erquicken ;

So musst du das Ganze im Kleinsten erblicken.

“T is but a trifle ; don't mind it, I pray !”
 Are words that you'll hear fifty times in a day.
 And it *may* be a trifle : some Fidgets I know
 O'er what *seem* but trifles will make a great row.

But the chances, full often, are quite t'other way ;
 And what *seems* but “ a trifle,” the same “ trifle ” may
 Be “ a life and death matter ” to him that's concerned.
 I've seen a heart broken ; and the whole trouble turned
 On “ a trifle ! ” or say, on something that *seemed*
 A trifle to those that looked on, who ne'er dreamed
 That a Great Heart was breaking. 'Twas broken at
 last ;

And “ he died of a trifle ” was the verdict that passed !
 But He who knows all things, 'tis certain He knew
 That 'twas *not* a mere “ trifle ” the Great Heart that
 slew.

D'you find this surprising ? It happens away ;
 And I who am writing will venture to say
 That “ trifles ” are killing their thousands a day !
 Then I pray you be careful, good Gentlemen all ;
 And look at “ the facts of the case ” ere you call
 Things “ trifles,” that may not be trifles at all !

As in morals this rule, so in physics likewise,
It holds good as to "trifles." Who uses his eyes,
Will see very clearly that things some would call
"Trifles," when close looked at, aren't trifles at all.
Some handfuls of acorns were sown years ago ;
Those handfuls of acorns are—the *forest* below !
A bird of strange feather just picked up a seed,
One day, then flew to a distant land, indeed.
The seed grew a plant, and ten thousand more,
And a forest is shading that distant shore !

"What are lichens and mosses but trifling things ;
And worthless, quite worthless !" says one, as he flings
Each one to the ground that I put in his hand.
They're "trifles" *he* thinks. But their part is so grand
In the system of Nature that, if they could give
An account of their deeds, no monarch alive
Could e'er boast of such triumphs over the world !
"Not so," says the Reader, whose nose is upcurled ;
"'Tis nonsense you talk, and I pray you'll have done.
"I thought you meant 'nonsense' when first you
began !"

And yet 'tis *no* nonsense, but perfectly true
That, but for these "mosses that glisten with dew,"
And but for these lichens that so disgust you,
This planet of ours, the green Earth, had rolled on
As void of all life as the wandering Moon ! *
Then I pray you be careful, good Gentlemen all ;
And look at "the facts of the case," ere you call
Things "trifles," that may not be trifles at all.

* Is the Moon void of life?—who knows? Science is like a *growing* tree,
not like a house already completed.

With unspeakable labour you build up your hall,
 And your palace and castle, with turrets so tall—
 A *plant*† has crept in, and your palace must fall !
 You've heard of the *Polypus* ; ‡ 'tis not a *great* thing,
 Nor, perhaps, should it set you a-wondering.
 'Tis but a small animal, as I'm aware ;
 Yet it works in a way that shall make you stare.
 Talk of *builders*, indeed ! it beats 'em all hollow ;
 And this you will see by what is to follow :
 These men who are builders may raise up a tower
 To a very great height, and may show us their power
 By building their castles all over the land ;
 And we who look on them may think them so grand ;
 But the *Polypus*, busy below in the sea,
 Is building a *country* for you and for me !
 Then I pray you be careful, good Gentlemen all ;
 And look at "the facts of the case," ere you call
 Things "trifles," that may not be trifles at all !

† *Merulius lachrymans*.

‡ The *Coral* is here referred to.

"Do Your Best!"

[IMPROMPTU.]



NE aim, through life, I'll keep in view,
 To one true principle hold true,
 Then there'll be little left to rue,
 I'll do my best.

I may not do all that I would ;
 But, striving still for what is good,
 Though I may be misunderstood,
 I'll do my best.

Though what I seek's my neighbour's weal,
And though I write but what I feel,
Should each his heart against me steel,
I'll do my best.

That what one does is often less
Than what one might, you shrewdly guess—
"If Fortune would but wise men bless,
They'd do their best."

I'm not so sure that *that* is so,—
They in whose sails the breezes blow,
Are often wretched, as I know,
E'en at the best.

I seek not wealth so much as lore,
But I would have one acre more,
And to increase my little store
I'll do my best.

Should Envy "talk," or Slander's slime
Bedaub my coat at any time,
I still shall write, I still shall rhyme
My very best.

My "best" may be but poor, I grant ;
But if I don't improve, I can't—
I'll try, at least ; I always want
To do my best.

Though praise for money may be bought,
For no man's praise I'll offer ought,
And should he blame, I'll answer—nought ;
I'll do my best.

I'll do my best, and use my pen,
When'er I may, now and again,
And gladly praise the honest men
Who do *their* best.

I'll do my best ; should praise or blame
Thence follow, it will be the same :
I hardly write in hope of fame,
But do my best.

Still do your best, my Brothers ! Ye
Who now on land, or on the sea,
Do toil and sweat, where'er ye be,
Still do your best.

All ye who share this life below—
Both ye who reap, and ye who sow,
If Fortune come, or Fortune go,
Still do your best !

Give, when your sails the breezes fan,
Don't lend, unless you know your man,
But for a friend do what you can ;
Still do your best !

Still do your best, my Sisters fair !
If wealth, or rank, be not your share,
There's something on this earth more rare,
It is *your* best !

Your tender hearts, still let them be
All full of love and charity ;
Strive to be good—let all men see
You do your best.

To smooth her own and brother's path,
What angel power fair Woman hath :
Exert that power, nor stop beneath
Your very best !

Your very best, my Sisters fair ;
Though of Life's bitterness a share
Not small is yours, still doth black Care
Follow the best.

Indulge no petty, peevish ways,
To vex poor Man, and set ablaze
His angered soul ; in every case,
Still do your best !

Your *Best*, my Brothers, Sisters, all ;
Then if you rise, or if you fall,
A voice from very heaven shall call :
They did their best !





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